

## Leading Children To The Lord

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### **God's Design For Leading Children To Himself**

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 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. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."*

Deuteronomy 6: 4-9

**God commanded the parents of the children to “impress” the things of God on their children. NO OTHER PROCESS IS GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE!**

Jesus cautioned those around Him to “not stumble” the children, and to treat them as God’s examples of what He desires in us all. But, He did not commission any other leader or spiritual person to lead children to the Lord!

So, our mandate as a children’s ministry (CM), is to do all we can to teach and inspire the children. We are to be examples of Godliness and to become significant influencers in the children’s lives.

It is NOT our mandate, vision, or purpose to lead the children to the Lord apart from their parents. We operate as partners with the parents! A partner never operates apart from another partner unless both partners agree to that operation. The parents who leave their children with us have NOT given us permission to operate apart from them. Here are our options:



To be “salty” influences in the children’s lives! To “stir them up to love and good works,” to “teach them all that (Jesus) commanded them,” and to be “right handlers of the Word of God.”

Then, we will do all we can to empower and equip the parents to lead their own children to the Lord. If a child expresses an interest in becoming a Christian, we will direct them to their parents, and do all we can to let the parents be the ones to lovingly lead their own children to the Lord.



If the parent is not able or willing to take the responsibility of leading his or her own child to the Lord, we will do so. This is only done when we have clearly been told that the parent is not willing or supportive of their child’s decision to become a Christian, or when the parent has told us to do so.

We will teach and lead the child in the prayer to receive Jesus as Lord. We will communicate what the child has done to the parent and then do all we can to equip the parents to be instrumental in the child’s spiritual growth.

## The Process of Child Evangelism At (*name of your church*) The Boundaries

### Respond To Child's Question or Interest

We will respond to a child's questions or interest. We will be salt and present challenges. We will not offer overt "Altar calls" unless the parents have been informed beforehand.

As much as possible, we will use the curriculum as a guide for discussion about the child's walk with the Lord. Our lives and words will be "salt" to stir their thirst for the Lord.

# SALT

### TEACHING / CURRICULUM

We will not have an "outside" team to deal with child evangelism. We will train and empower the team to respond to children's questions.

We will not conduct an all-room "altar call." We will be "salt" and challenge children to consider their own relationship with Jesus, but we will respond to their questions privately, or with their parents.

If a child asks a question about the Lord, or wants to accept the Lord, we will let the parents know. We will train and empower them to lead their own children.

### Protect Against Peer Responses

Work Through Classroom Team

### Support and Empower Parents

## How To Be “Salty” With The Children

*“You are the salt of the earth!”*

Matthew 5:13

Jesus challenged us to be “the salt of the earth.” He meant that we were to be everything to others that salt is for food. Salt preserves and adds flavor. We, as believers, are to preserve the value of life and to add hope and peace (“flavor”) to others’ lives. All of this is about Jesus!

There are many scriptures that challenge us to be “salty” around others to such an extent that those around us will be interested in Jesus.



- *“...let your light so shine among others that will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* (Mt. 5:16)
- *“...conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”* (Phil. 1:27)
- *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you **love** one another.”* (John 13:35)

Here are some ideas to make sure that you are “salty” around children.

1. Add more “salt” to your lesson
  - a. Focus on the children’s lives, not just their heads!
  - b. Ask them specific questions about their personal spiritual lives or relationships with Jesus.
  - c. Let them ask questions – let the answers stir them to think personally
  - d. Go beyond the curriculum / veer from the curriculum
  - e. Discern whether to deal personally with the child or with the entire class
2. Be an example yourself – let them “hear,” see and feel your spiritual walk and strength
3. Stop and pray during the lesson
4. Make comments about God’s love or greatness during the lesson
5. Use “guided conversation” techniques (always be ready to connect your conversations to Jesus):
  - a. “Tell me about...”
  - b. “How does that make you feel?”
  - c. “Isn’t it weird that...”
  - d. “What do you think happened?”
  - e. “Why did that person do that?”
  - f. “How do you think God feels about that?”



## Use of The Room or Hallway

1. It is always safer to stay in the classroom! You can talk “privately” to a child in the hallway **ONLY IF** there are 3 team members in the room, and there is another cleared CM team member in the hallway! If there are only 2 team members in the room, you cannot leave. If there is not a CM team member in the hallway, you shouldn’t be alone with the child in the hallway!
2. **ALWAYS** obey the “Never Alone” rule!

## **How To Lead A Child To The Lord**

The best way to lead a child to the Lord is to be a “living sacrifice” to the Lord yourself! Let your words and actions reflect the presence and love of the Lord! Let the Holy Spirit so indwell you that the children in your class are inspired to be like you.

If you feel that the parents are not willing or interested in leading their own child to the Lord, here is the process to follow:

1. Be as “salty” as possible! Let your words and actions attract the child to the Lord!
2. Listen to the child’s questions or comments. Ask the Lord to let you “see into” the child’s needs.
3. Ask the child specific, personal questions about his/her relationship with God.
4. Most children respond to God based on His love and His call. The simplicity of a child’s desire to love God, or to respond to God’s love is powerful. Don’t try to make it more complex by asking theological questions.
5. Repentance is an important part of becoming a Christian. Younger children may not need to repent from too much, other than a simple expression of “I’m sorry for the bad things I do.”
6. Review some basic scriptures that outline God’s work with people, and His plan for salvation:
  - a. God made everything! – Genesis 1: 1
  - b. God made people – Genesis 1: 26, 27
  - c. God wanted people to obey Him, but they didn’t – Genesis 2: 16, 17; 3: 6, 7
  - d. God sent the people out of the Garden because they didn’t obey Him (they sinned) – Genesis 3: 23
  - e. When we disobey it is called “sin”
  - f. The Bible says that everybody sins! – Romans 3: 23
  - g. God is Holy and perfect, and He can’t be friends with people who sin! We are separated from God, just like Adam and Eve were. – Isaiah 59: 2; Habakkuk 1: 13
  - h. God doesn’t like being separated from us! He wants us to come to Him! – Isaiah 55: 3-7
  - i. God made a law that the only way to forgive sins is to sacrifice a perfect animal (to show that we’re sorry) – Leviticus 4: 27, 28, 35
  - j. God grew tired of sacrifices. They weren’t working. The people weren’t really sorry for their sins. – Isaiah 43: 22-24
  - k. God wanted to end sacrifices. He wanted to show us how much He loves us. He knew that that would make us stop sinning. So, He became a person (Jesus) – John 10: 30; 1 Timothy 1: 15; 1 Timothy 2: 5
  - l. Jesus died and became the last sacrifice for sins! – Romans 5: 8; 1 Peter 3: 18
  - m. Jesus didn’t stay dead! He came back to life to prove He can give us eternal life in Heaven. – 1 Peter 3: 18
  - n. If we are sorry for our sins, we believe that Jesus was God, and that He died to forgive our sins and to bring us back to God, we can be “saved” from being separated from God. – 1 Timothy 2: 5, 6; John 1: 12;



## Involve / Empower The Parents In Their Child's Spiritual Journey

Parents are the ones who are given the responsibility to lead their children to the Lord. It is our primary job, in children's ministry, to communicate with, support, and empower the parents in this life-changing adventure.

Today's parents are very "sober" about the spiritual responsibilities of raising their children. Many parents feel unable or unprepared for such a challenge. Once they are offered "tools" or guidance about this responsibility, they respond with great gratitude. Most parents would feel offended if we, in the CM, "rob" them of their joy by leading their children to the Lord apart from them. Here are some suggested ways to communicate and support the parents:



1. When a child asks a serious question about God, Jesus, sin, salvation, or Heaven.
  - a. If you can answer the child's question in front of the other children, do so.
  - b. If you can't answer the question in front of the other children, swing by the child and answer the question "briefly." **Tell the parent(s), "Your child asked an excellent question today about \_\_\_\_\_. Here is what I told him/her. Here is my contact information; if I can help you answer this question, please let me know."**
2. When a child expresses a desire to accept Jesus.
  - a. Congratulate the child (privately), and tell him/her that you will let his/her parent(s) know, and they will help him/her with the prayer.
  - b. At check-out, speak to the parent(s) away from the check-out table. **Tell the parent(s), "Your child expressed an interest in accepting Jesus (becoming a Christian) in class today. This is an awesome thing! We want you, as parent(s), to be the one(s) to lead your child to the Lord. Would you like to do that right now? If not, here is my contact information; if I can help you in any way, please let me know."**
3. When a child is unsure of his/her salvation but has already accepted the Lord.
  - a. Assure the child using key scriptures of assurance (1 John 5: 13; John 5: 24). Talk with the child about God's love, and the power and significance of Jesus' death. Talk with the child about God's grace and mercy shown to us through Jesus. Talk with the child about confession of sin and God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and that his/her sins are forgiven by Jesus' blood.
  - b. At check-out, speak to the parent(s) away from the check-out table. **Tell the parent(s), "Your child asked about his/her salvation. He/she told me that he/she already accepted the Lord. As a child, it is somewhat "normal" to wonder about salvation and forgiveness of sin, but God wants him/her to be sure and to have peace about that. I talked with him/her about this and shared some scriptures (tell them the ones you used), but I know that he/she would like to talk about it with you as well. Here is my contact information; if I can help you in any way, please let me know."**



# God's Plan of Salvation



## God Made Everything!

God made everything! He is very smart! He made everything to show us how much He loves us!

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Genesis 1: 1



## God Made People

God made people. The first people were Adam and Eve. He made people so we could worship Him, and so He could show us His love.

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. '"*

Genesis 1: 26, 27



## People Didn't Obey God

God wanted people to obey Him, but they didn't! He told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of a certain tree; but they did!

*"And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.' ... When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."*

Genesis 2: 16, 17; 3: 6, 7



## God Sent The People Out of The Garden

Because Adam and Eve didn't obey God, God sent them out of the Garden.

*"So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."*

Genesis 3: 23, 24

# Sin



## To Not Obey God Is Called “Sin”

Adam and Eve “sinned” because they didn’t obey God. When we do bad things, God calls it “sin.”

*“Anyone who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.” James 4: 17*



## Our Sin Keeps Us Away From God

God is “holy” and perfect. He can’t be a friend with people who sin! Our sin separates us from God, just like Adam and Eve’s sin did.

*“But your sins have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” Isaiah 59: 2*



## God Wants Us To Come Back To Him!

God made people so He could be close to us! When our sin keeps us away from Him, He’s not happy with that. He wants us to come back to Him! He loves us!

*“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”*

Isaiah 55: 7

## God Made A Law About Sacrifice

God wanted His people to stop sinning! He made a law that sin could only be forgiven if the person who sinned brought a perfect animal to the temple to kill it. God thought that people would stop sinning if they knew that they would have to kill their perfect animal to be forgiven.

*“If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, he is guilty...he must bring a female goat without defect... In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.” Leviticus 4: 27, 28, 35*

*“...and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9: 22*

## God Got Tired of Sacrifices!

The law that God made to stop people from sinning didn’t work because the people stopped feeling sorry for their sins! They just went down to the temple and bought a goat or sheep to sacrifice. They didn’t feel bad about sin at all! God got tired of all the sacrifices, and all the sin!

*“When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?” says the LORD.” Malachi 1:13*





## God Came To Earth, As Jesus, To Be The Final Sacrifice!

God became a man to show us God's love and to teach us how to live. He also became a man to become the final sacrifice.

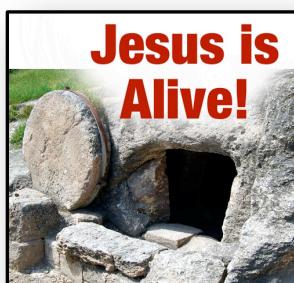
*"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. ...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John 1: 1, 2, 14*

## Jesus Died To Be The Last Sacrifice For Sins!

Jesus' death satisfied the law about forgiveness that God made. Jesus' death was the sacrifice for everyone's sins! Jesus' death was the final sacrifice!

*"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit."*

1 Peter 3: 18



## Jesus Didn't Stay Dead!

Jesus' death was a very sad thing! All the disciples thought that the story of God's love was over. But then, after 3 days, Jesus came back to life again! He proved that He was God! He came back to life to give us the hope of Heaven!

*"...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve."* 1 Corinthians 15: 3-5



## Jesus Saved Us From Being Separated From God!

If we are sorry for our sins, believe that Jesus was God, and that he died to forgive our sins and bring us back to God; we can be "saved." We are no longer separated from God because of our sins! Jesus' death satisfies the law about forgiveness that God made!

*"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



## Be Sorry For Your Sins And Give Your Life To Jesus

All God wants is for you to love Him more than anything else. He wants you to be sorry for your sins and to make choices that would make Him happy all your life. He knows you will make mistakes, and He will help you get better at making the right choices. It all starts with giving your life to Jesus in prayer.

*"Dear Jesus, I love you. I'm sorry that I do bad things sometimes. Please forgive me. Thank you for loving me and for dying on the cross to save me. Thank you that you came back alive so you could help me. I want to live my whole life for you! In Jesus' name, Amen."*

**NOTE: Adjust this prayer according to your own church process.**

## Possible Parent Support Booklets

These booklets would be available on a wall-mounted rack in the children's ministry hallway. The rack would be attractively built and decorated. The little booklets would be small enough to be read quickly, yet large enough to provide space to teach and encourage the parents. Classroom team members might use these booklets as they encourage or support parents directly at the check-out areas as well. The topics could include:



1. Raising A Peaceful Child In A Fearful World – How to prayerfully and actively instill peace in your child in the middle of a world filled with fearful, dangerous people and events. (Peace/trust in God)
2. Raising A Disciplined Child In An Undisciplined World – How to prayerfully and actively instill a character of respect and discipline in your child without being too “easy” or too “hard.” (Scriptural discipline, respect)
3. Raising A Godly Child In An Ungodly World – How to prayerfully and actively inspire and lead your child to a life of purity and a dedication to be “set apart” for God. (Holiness, purity, godliness)
4. Raising A Child Who Is Hungry For God’s Word – How to prayerfully and actively instill a “hunger and thirst” for God’s Word in your child. (God’s Word, Deut. 6)
5. Raising A Discerning Child In A Gray World – How to prayerfully and actively instill a sense of what is right and wrong in God’s eyes in your child. (Biblical standards of right and wrong)
6. Raising A Brave Child In A Weak World – How to prayerfully and actively instill a strength of character and self-determination in your child that is the foundation to do what is right in God’s eyes. (Determination, faithfulness, conviction, bravery)
7. Raising A Secure Child In An Insecure World – How to prayerfully and actively instill a sense of security and confidence in your child. (Wholeness in God, security in God, purpose in life)
8. Raising A Contented Child In A Greedy World – How to prayerfully and actively instill a sense of contentment in your child in a world that always wants more and is never happy. (Godly contentment, thankfulness, God’s provision)
9. Raising A Spiritually Growing Child – How to prayerfully and actively inspire your child to grow spiritually by modeling healthy spiritual growth principles yourself and reinforcing spiritual growth choices in your child. (Prayer, church, fellowship, God’s Word, witnessing, learning)
10. Talking With Your Child About Homosexuality – How to prayerfully address the topic of homosexuality with your child. (God’s standards, love for others, forgiveness, healing, satisfaction in God)
11. Talking With Your Child About Pornography – How to prayerfully address the topic of pornography with your child without heightening an interest in it. (Purity, God’s design for marriage, the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, respect for the other sex)
12. Talking With Your Child About Salvation – How to prayerfully address the topic of salvation; how it is attained and the assurance that God provides. (Faith vs. works or feelings)
13. Talking With Your Child About Hell – How to prayerfully address the topic of Hell with your child, while also identifying the enemy’s actions and God’s protection and plans. (Spiritual warfare, God’s judgment, God’s forgiveness and protection)

14. Talking With Your Child About Heaven – How to prayerfully address the topic of Heaven with your child, while also celebrating God’s plan for salvation and His desire to have fellowship with us before we die. (Forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, fellowship with God)
15. Talking With Your Child About Prayer – How to prayerfully address the topic of prayer with your child, while underscoring God’s presence, care, direction, and provision for us. (God’s Word, God’s will, personal relationship with God, “hearing” God, how to pray, understanding God’s answers)
16. Talking With Your Child About Sin – How to prayerfully address the topic of sin with your child, while emphasizing the importance of a “new life” in Jesus and God’s forgiveness. (Jesus’ death, new life, confession, repentance, forgiveness 1 John 1:9, the power of the Spirit, taking thoughts captive 2 Cor. 10:5)
17. Talking With Your Child About Forgiveness – How to prayerfully address the topic of forgiveness with your child, while emphasizing confession, repentance, and Jesus’ death for our sin. (Jesus’ death, conviction, confession, repentance, personal choice, God’s mercy and grace)
18. Talking With Your Child About Bad Things That Happen – How to prayerfully address the topic of why bad things happen in life with your child. (God’s sovereignty, God’s presence, the results of sin, trust in God, Rom. 8:28)
19. Talking With Your Child About Divorce – How to prayerfully address the topic of divorce with your child, while celebrating God’s plan for marriage and a family. (God’s plan for marriage, human nature, God’s promise to never leave us, being a good family member and child of God no matter what)
20. Talking With Your Child About Death – How to prayerfully address the topic of death with your child. (The sin of Adam & Eve, God’s plan for eternal life, God’s sorrow, hope of Heaven, taking advantage of every day)
21. Talking With Your Child About Their Choice of Friends - How to prayerfully address the topic of the choice of friends with your child. (Peer pressure, witnessing, “salt / light,” 1 Cor. 15:33)

## Possible Parent Seminar Topics

Because of the scriptural mandate that the parents of the children develop their own children spiritually (Deut. 6: 4-9), you should do all you can to support, train, and empower the parents in this Biblical challenge. Here is a list of parent seminars that might be offered throughout the years. Each of these main topics could be stretched out over several seminar meetings.



### 1. “Knowing Your Child”

- a. General needs of all children.
- b. Your child’s likes / dislikes.
- c. Your child’s fears.
- d. Your child’s wants.
- e. Your child’s hopes.
- f. Using this knowledge to bond with, lead, and inspire your child.

### 2. “Creating A Home That Launches Your Children”

- a. God’s plan for the home “environment” in scripture.
- b. Setting boundaries.
- c. Supporting the boundaries.
- d. Creating a fun home.
- e. Creating a respectful home.
- f. The power and danger of “freedom of choice.”
- g. Using the four “sensitive times” mentioned in Deut. 6:4-9:
  - Mealtimes
  - “Together times”
  - Bedtimes
  - Morning
- h. Using “teachable moments” to support, comfort, guide.



### 3. “Becoming A ‘Significant’ Person In Your Child’s Life”

- a. The “seasons” of parenthood:
  - Caregiver (for child aged birth-3-yrs.)
  - Developer (for child aged 1-yr. – 14-yrs.)
  - Guide (for child aged 13-yrs. – 18 yrs.)
  - Encourager (for child aged 17-yrs. – death)
- b. Earning the position of “significant” in your child’s life.
- c. Guiding without smothering during your child’s significant events:
  - The first “crush”
  - Rejection by others / choosing friends
  - Failures (school, sports, friends, work, etc.)
  - Successes (school, sports, friends, work, etc.)
  - Injuries
  - Deaths (animals, people)



#### 4. “How To Discipline”

- a. The Biblical principles of discipline.
- b. The foundation of good discipline:
  - Love (sacrificial, visible, tangible, consistent)
  - Concern for future
  - Talking, listening
  - Consistency within realistic limits
- c. The enemies of discipline:
  - Inconsistency
  - Using God, Jesus, or the Bible as “weapons”
  - A thirst for control or power
  - Physical abuse
  - Lack of concern or interest in the child’s feelings
  - Lack of reinforcement of love afterward
- d. Use of words.
- e. Use of spanking.
- f. Use of “time out.”
- g. Use of consequences.



#### 5. “Raising A Child Who Stands Out From The Crowd”

- a. Developing a strong “work ethic.”
- b. Inspiring the child to be “set apart” or “pure” in the Lord.
- c. Developing a strong, Godly, “Christlike” character.
- d. Developing a child who is faithful.
- e. Developing a child who is honest.
- f. Developing a child who cares for and serves others more than him/herself.

