



# Teaching Children to Share Their Faith

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*“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).*

**T**he Great Commission is for all believers. Even young children can share the good news.

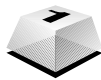
David, Joseph, and the children who praised Jesus in the temple are biblical examples of children who boldly declared their faith.

Children can share their faith while they are growing and becoming spiritually mature. They need not wait until they are old enough to understand theology on an adult level. We are reminded in Proverbs 20:11 that “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” A pure heart and a desire to serve God are the first steps to being used by God. God uses children today—even as He has through the centuries—to accomplish His purposes.

The question before us is: “How can we prepare children to share the gospel with their friends and through church outreach ministries?” This question deserves serious consideration as we look at the challenges our children face in an increasingly secular society. We can rest assured that the Holy Spirit will provide the wisdom and boldness we need in any situation (Acts 5:29-32).

Children who have had a genuine conversion experience want to share their faith with others but sometimes lack the understanding of where to begin. We can

help by giving them practical experiences and training in the church setting. Here are some ideas to consider for your class.



In your Sunday School class begin by giving children opportunities to share what Jesus means to them. This will be good preparation for them to express their faith outside the church. Ask volunteers to tell how God is working in their lives and helping them with their problems. Provide time each week for at least one child to share what God has done for him or



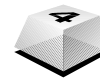
her. Invite members from your congregation to come to your class to share their testimonies. This will inspire the children and help them learn through the example of familiar adult role models. Teenagers can also be very effective with the children. People of any age can make an impact if they have the ability to communicate with children.



Teach your students verses of salvation Scripture. Help them understand the meaning through visuals, explanations, and discussion. Ask the children to mark the verses in their Bibles. This will help them to find references easily when they are talking with one of their friends or unsaved family members.



For a learning activity choose a small group of children to do a skit, or instruct them to role-play different ways to tell their friends about Jesus. A short, open-ended script will help them get started. Puppets can be very effective as children identify with them easily and gain confidence as they rehearse real-life situations.



Another idea is to divide your class into small groups of three to five children and seat them in a circle or at tables. Ask the children to complete a sentence as a springboard for discussion. Two examples are, “I’m glad I’m a Christian because...” or, “We know God loves us because...” A good way to begin this exercise is for the teachers to share first. You can write the children’s responses on a chalkboard or tablet.

Next, have the children write down their responses on 8½-by-11-inch sheets of lined paper. Provide a blank sheet of paper along with colored pencils, crayons, or markers to illustrate their short essays. The composi-

tions and illustrations can be glued or stapled (side by side) to a large sheet of colored construction paper that has been folded in half in book form. These testimonies can be displayed in your room and will serve as a means to encourage the children to express their faith in many ways.

Younger children can participate in this activity as well by dictating their sentences to a teacher onto journal paper. The children can also draw pictures illustrating Jesus' love for us or pictures of things they are thankful for. Examples are given below.

**I'm thankful to God for:**

- **my home**
- **the beautiful world He has made**
- **my brothers and sisters; my friends, school, and church**
- **loving me as His child**
- **forgiving my sins**
- **dying on the cross for me**
- **making a home in heaven for me**

The value of this activity is that

as children learn to express their love for God in class, they learn how to share the gospel outside the church walls.



One of the best ways to help children learn how to witness is to involve them in outreach ministries. In *Mobilizing Kids for Outreach*, Pete Hohmann describes the need for a paradigm shift in our thinking of how we teach children in the church. An overemphasis on sitting still and listening without opportunities for participation may result in passivity in the children we are teaching. Hohmann points out the need to train and involve children in evangelism while they are still in the children's department. Forming ministry teams that will go out into the community in a real life experience is a wonderful way to involve children in evangelism. Musical groups and puppet teams can minister in inner-city churches, parks, nursing homes, day care centers, and fairs—just to

name a few possibilities.

Sunday Schools can plan outreach and family events designed specifically to help their students introduce their friends to church. This first step will make it easier for children to explain what they believe to their friends. Some possibilities are Gym Nite, Fall Fun Festival, Ice Cream Sunday, VBS, camp-outs, Super Saturday, Back-to-School Night, and a Birthday Party for Jesus. Sunday School contests also provide children with special opportunities to invite their friends to church.

Finally, pray in class for your children that God will help them to shine for Him wherever they are. Help them understand that while some people may not show interest, others will hear the message with gladness. Whatever the response, your students will know that they have obeyed Christ's command and have had a vital part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

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## Questions For Further Study—

1. List three ways that you can prepare the children of your church to share the gospel with others.

This article originally appeared in the *Christian Education Counselor*. The Counselor is a bi-monthly magazine that provides inspirational articles; practical teaching aids; information and helps for promotion, planning, and staff training. In addition, it keeps readers abreast of current educational themes and gives them guidance to develop as knowledgeable and productive Christian educators. To order call 1-800-641-4310.

