

Sharing God's Invitation with the Children

The invitation is the most important part of the club. It is an invitation to respond to the working of the Holy Spirit as the Word of God is taught. Jesus Himself invited children to come to Him (Mark 10:14).

Important Things to Know:

- The invitation is not the time to re-teach the Gospel.
- It is brief.
- Verses and terminology will vary though the steps remain the same.
- It is not an altar call or appeal to emotions.
- It is the opportunity to talk more.
- The Holy Spirit is the one who brings to the point of decision!
- The invitation is presented after the Gospel has been presented.
- Give an invitation during each club time!

Important Steps in Giving an Invitation

1. Briefly review the need and the way.
2. Read and explain the invitation verse phrase by phrase.
 - a. Condition/ promise
 - b. Question—"Are you willing to turn from sin and believe in Jesus as your Savior today?"
3. Bow heads and close eyes.
4. "Show me by..."

If today, you have believed in Jesus as the only one who can save you from your sin – and you've never done that before - or if you have questions about what it means to believe in Jesus, will you show me by raising your hand?
- 5) "Meet me..."

When you meet me..., I will show you from the Bible what it means to believe in Jesus as your Savior.

Helpful Hints

- Keep the invitation short.
- Don't re-teach the Gospel.
- Let the Holy Spirit work.
- Use "you."
- Avoid "ask Jesus into your heart."
- Keep with terminology in Scripture.
- Practice!
- Never take children behind closed doors! (Remember CEF Child Protection Policy.)
- Write out steps on a sticky note in your Bible.

The Wordless Book training seminar – available in both English and Spanish – is on the CMI Online training site at this address: cefcmi.com/wordlessbook.

Counseling the Child for Salvation

The counseling time provides an opportunity to ask questions that indicate if the child understands the message of salvation. It can be unpredictable because children all have different needs and backgrounds. No two counseling situations are ever alike!

Use the “Guiding a Child to the Savior: Key Questions” tool as a guide as you practice and counsel. Let the Holy Spirit guide what you say during counseling. Meet the needs of the child by asking questions.

Counseling the child is a serious responsibility!

Six sections of the counseling tool

This is a **review** of the Gospel.

Ask questions that generally don't have yes/no answers.

- 1) Establish the child's reason for coming
 - “Why did you come to talk with me?”
 - “Can you remember a time when you believed in Jesus as your Savior before today?”
 - “Why do you need the Lord Jesus?”
- 2) Questions reviewing God, the need and the way of salvation
 - Most questions cannot be answered with yes/no.
 - Cannot continue with counseling if child does not admit he or she is a sinner.
 - Show child verses from the Bible.
 - Speak with calm, friendly voice.
 - Keep vocabulary simple.
- 3) Believing in Jesus; prayer
 - Ask God to help you discern if the child understands what it means to believe.
 - If the child doesn't understand—
 - See if he has any questions.
 - Pray for him out loud.
 - Encourage him to keep listening in club.
 - Give a Gospel tract.
 - Remind him he can believe at any time.
 - Read condition/promise verse used in the invitation.
 - Explain the verse phrase by phrase, using the same terminology for the condition and promise (i.e., “believeth” and “have eternal life”).
 - “Believe”—trust completely in Jesus.
 - “have eternal life”—a relationship with God that starts now on Earth and will continue in Heaven someday.
 - Ask the child, “Do you believe in Jesus as the only Savior from your sins?”

- If the child answers “no”—
 - Perhaps there is something they still don’t understand—ask if they have any questions.
 - Not ready to believe now but wants to later (i.e., at home).
 - Not ready to believe at all.
 - Remind him he can believe when he is ready.
 - Pray out loud for him.
 - Give a Gospel tract.
- If the child answers “yes”—
 - Encourage child to tell God what he believes in a prayer (see counseling tool for prompts).
 - Emphasize the importance of belief in the heart.
 - Have child pray in his own words.

4) Assurance of salvation/confession of sin

- This is more a time of teaching, not asking questions.
- Ask two important questions:
 - “If you truly believe in the Lord Jesus, what did He just do for you?”
 - “How do you know?”
- Go back to the Word of God for assurance.
 - Show condition/promise verse again.
 - Put child’s name in the verse.
- Read and explain Hebrews 13:5 (put on hand).
- Read and explain Hebrews 13:6 (put on hand).
- “Now that you have Jesus living in you, who will help you say NO to sin? Jesus lives in you to give you the power to do what is right.”
- Read and explain 1 John 1:9 phrase by phrase

5) Brief instruction in Christian growth

- Read and explain 2 Peter 3:18.
 - G- go to church.
 - R- read your Bible and pray.
 - O- obey God’s Word (remind again of Hebrews 13:5-6).
 - W- witness.

6) Closing

- Give child tract.
- Have child pray “thank you” prayer.
- Pray aloud for the child.
- Encourage child to tell another teacher what Jesus did for him.

For even more helps and examples, demonstrations are available free from CMI Online. Go to the address you see here on the screen. (www.cefonline.com/freedemos)

Other Counseling Situations

↳ Counseling a Group of Children

- ◆ Use the same questions you would use with an individual, but direct the questions to different ones in the group. Think of ways to rephrase the same question so that different ones can answer in their own way.

Examples of questions on sin:

Why do you need Jesus, Manuel?

What keeps you from going to Heaven, Sue?

What is sin, Kim?

What things do boys and girls your age do that are sin, Aziza?

- ◆ Try to involve as many of the children as possible in answering the questions by directing them to specific children so the same ones aren't answering all the questions.
- ◆ Give the children an opportunity to pray silently to express their belief in Christ. ("Have you believed in Jesus for salvation today for the first time?") Provide prompts for children who have believed to silently pray and express belief in Christ in their own words.
 - Tell God that you have sinned and that you are sorry.
 - Tell God you believe in (trust) the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for your sin and rose again.
 - Tell God you want to live His way, with His help.

It is of vital importance that children understand it is not saying certain words that will save them but belief in Jesus as the only one who can save them. After going through assurance of salvation and growth, each child could pray a silent thank-you prayer afterward. Give each child a tract and pray for the group.

↳ Children May Have Other Needs

Sometimes a child may respond to the invitation for reasons other than the need for salvation. In those cases, try to discern the reason, address that reason and send him back to the group. A child may respond to the invitation many times because of:

- ◆ Lack of assurance
 - Go back to the condition/promise verse and check the child's understanding of it. Help him to see that if he has met the condition, God has kept His promise.
 - Talk about God's presence with him and how that presence is forever.

- If he is really unsure that he has believed in Jesus as Savior, encourage him to respond to God's invitation now. You may ask, "Do you believe now? Would you like to tell God that you believe He is the only way for you to have salvation?"
 - Help the child understand what he can tell God.
 - Have him pray a thank-you prayer to God for saving him.
 - Pray for the child.
- ◆ Unconfessed sin
- Go over 1 John 1:9 with him.
 - Encourage him to confess his sin to God right there while he is with you, and then have him pray a thank-you prayer to God for forgiving him.
 - Encourage the child to pray and read the Bible, seeking God's help in times of temptation.
 - Also go over Hebrews 13:5b, 6a with the child to help him see Jesus is with him and the Holy Spirit is there to help him live to please God.
 - Explain to the child that he should pray regularly that God will help him not to sin in his daily life and he can ask God to help him live a life pleasing to God.
- ◆ Personal attention
- Try to give this child attention before and during class.
 - Give special jobs for the child to do to help you.
 - Offer to pray with the child concerning his needs.
- ◆ The shy child
- The shy child may not respond to your questions so be gentle and reassuring.
 - Start with comments like: "I've noticed you have been really listening to the Bible lesson." OR "I'm glad you have come to talk with me today. I like the way you have (*name something you have observed about the child during club*)" – whatever will get him talking to you. Then ease into the subject.
 - Tell him about your salvation experience, and then try some of the counseling questions. Tell him he can whisper the answers in your ear.
 - Give him a tract and encourage him to receive Christ when he is ready. Pray aloud for him, and encourage him to come and talk with you another time.
- ◆ The child who laughs
- He may be laughing because of feelings of guilt about his sin, because of nervousness about talking with you, or just to gain attention.
- Begin with some non-threatening questions about him to put him at ease. Tell of your decision to trust Christ and its importance to you.
 - Talk about the seriousness of sin and the decision each must make. Ask direct questions of him by name.

- If problems persist, ask him to wait with the rest of the class, and you can counsel him separately.
- ◆ The child who is being playful and doesn't really seem to be interested in spiritual matters.
If you are discerning that the Holy Spirit does not seem to be convicting of sin:
 - Talk about the seriousness of this decision.
 - Give the child the option to listen quietly or return to the group.
 - Give him a Gospel tract.
- ◆ The dominant child
 - The dominant child may monopolize the conversation.
 - Encourage him to help you to counsel the others by letting them answer some of the questions. Direct the questions to specific children by name.
 - If he persists, you may have to counsel him separately.
- ◆ The child who says he has already believed on Jesus
 - Don't assume this means the child is saved. Ask questions such as, *When did you believe in Jesus? Where were you when you did that? Why did you need to believe in Jesus? What does it mean to you that you believe in Jesus? What did that decision mean to you?* Listen carefully to the child's answers to discern if he truly has received Christ. If you feel he has, find out what need brought him to respond to you today, and counsel him for that need.
 - If you feel he has not truly received Christ as Savior or has misunderstood what you mean, proceed with the counseling questions.
- ◆ The very young child
 - Don't assume he is too young. Use the counseling questions as you would with any other child, shortening or simplifying them if necessary.
 - Use *The Wordless Book* or a preschool tract as a visual aid to help focus his attention.
 - If you discern he is not ready, pray with him that God would help him to continue to want to know God, and that when he is ready he will receive Christ. Invite him to talk with you again.
- ◆ The child who responds to the invitation, but does not come for counseling
 - You will need to be careful in such situations not to pressure or manipulate children into making decisions, but do all you can to make it very easy for them to come to you for counseling and gently encourage them to do so.
 - Approach the child after class in a welcoming way, letting him know you would be glad to talk with him if he would like.

- ◆ Occasionally, you may need to give opportunities for children to express their belief in Jesus for salvation in class time when counseling is not possible. While this is not the ideal approach, a model prayer can be given for the children to repeat. This could be worded as follows:

Dear God, I know I have sinned and I am sorry. I know I deserve to be punished for my sin. I believe Jesus died on the cross for me and came alive again. Thank you that He took my punishment so I can be saved from my sins forever. Help me live to please You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Following the prayer, the teacher might say something like:

If you believed in Jesus as your Savior for the first time today, please show me by (raised hand or other means) so I can pray for you.

Please note: *The emphasis in this statement is on the fact that the child believed in Jesus rather than that he said the prayer.*

- ◆ The child who doesn't understand
 - If you discern the child is not ready, pray with him that God would help him to continue to want to know God and that when he is ready he will receive Christ.