

# Tips for Cracking Open the Gospel

## **Pray.**

Ask God to help you talk about Him in a way that is loving, simple, and accurate. Ask Him to open the hearts and minds of the children and to prepare and guide you for this discussion.

## **Trust God.**

Keep in mind that changing the heart and mind of any person is God's job. We are responsible to deliver His message lovingly and accurately, but we're not responsible to wrench a decision from someone who is not ready. Asking "Would you like to hear more about this now or at a later time?" and respecting their answers may help you know when or whether to continue the conversation.

## **Be an example.**

Your life can show them that God's love matters.

## **Listen.**

Pay attention to the questions children ask. When you don't know the answer, tell them so and be sure to talk with them again when you find the answer. Listen for their heartfelt concerns and fears.

## **Keep it simple.**

Children are literal. Avoid using phrases like "ask Jesus into your heart," which to a child may seem more surgical than metaphorical. Children may repeat these phrases, but they may not understand them.

## **Ask questions.**

You'll know how well they understand when you ask who-what-when-where-and-why questions. Ask questions that require them to offer their thoughts and their opinions—not a pat answer.

## **Allow time for private conversation and thought.**

Some children are afraid to ask questions in a group setting, and some may need a little time to think things over. Let them know you'll be available to answer questions later. And pay close attention if a child brings the subject up in a more private setting.



# Watch Your Language!

For those who are longtime churchgoers, the following words may feel natural. But for those who do not attend, they seem foreign. Try to avoid the following terms and phrases while telling others about Jesus and His resurrection. Or if you use them, be sure to explain them.

**accept Christ/receive Christ:** welcoming Jesus Christ into my life, realizing who He is and why He came

**backsliding:** behavior of a Christian who seems to be losing their faith

**believe:** holding onto Jesus in total trust as He is my only hope

**blessed:** a feeling of personal well-being, especially as connected with a casual religious experience

**born again:** a spiritual birth experience that begins a Father-son/daughter relationship between God and me

**discipleship/discipling:** a believer teaching another believer about the Christian life, usually one-on-one

**fellowship:** a sense of belonging to a community

**made right with God:** the "reconciliation" of the believer with God

**mission:** Christian activities which serve the church or the community

**on fire for God:** excited about Christianity, especially "outreach"

**outreach:** process of taking the Christian message to people who are not Christians

**sanctified:** to make holy or purify

**saved:** rescued by Jesus from the death penalty for running my own life

**savior:** who rescues me from a deadly situation from which I cannot rescue myself

**sin:** running my own life

**The Good News:** the Bible, the New Testament or the Gospels; or general Christian doctrine

**walk with God:** practice of applying Christian principles and beliefs to everyday life

**witness/witnessing:** telling someone how and why I am a Christian



Adapted from "Beyond 'Christianese'" by Ron Hutchcraft in [www.moodymagazine.com/articles](http://www.moodymagazine.com/articles) and "Christianese" in [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org); November 15, 2005.