



Leading a Child to Christ, part 1 of 2—

Reaching Children

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He's just going through a stage," the frustrated mother explained to her friends. Many of us have said the same thing about our children. As parents and teachers, we recognize that children go through stages in their growth and development. Growth stages are predictable and sequential, but the rate of growth varies according to each child's unique timetable and is influenced by external factors such as nutrition and environment. Children grow spiritually at varying rates, just as they do physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Speak Their Language

Effective teachers recognize the importance of teaching children at their developmental levels, using language they can understand. We cannot require children to grasp adult theological terminology before they can have a Christian experience.

It seems evident that children raised in strong Christian homes have an advantage in their spiritual development. Many receive Christ at an early age. Dr. James Dobson testifies

that he was just 3 years old when he accepted Christ, and the experience is still vivid in his memory. However, most children don't have such a rich spiritual heritage and may need to hear the gospel many times over before they understand it. Others open their hearts in simple faith the first time they hear the salvation



story. In his book, *Teaching for Decision*, (Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO, 1989) Richard Dresselhaus states:

"Children who have grown up in a Christian home often are better able to comprehend the plan of salvation because of

family devotions and regular Bible instruction in the home.

"However, the Holy Spirit's ways are not the ways of men. Many testify of true conversion experiences at a very early age, even without having been carefully taught. While these instances may be exceptional, we must accept the Spirit's sovereign work."

God's Part / Your Part

Whatever a child's spiritual background, it is our responsibility not only to teach about salvation but to give opportunities in our Sunday School and children's church classes for children to receive Christ. While only God knows the heart and when a child is ready, our part is to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and be ready to show the child the way to salvation.

The first converts of the great evangelist D.L. Moody were children in his Sunday School class. We have the same opportunity in our Sunday Schools today.

(Part 2 contains points to remember the next time you have an opportunity to lead a child to Christ.)

Questions For Further Study—

1. What percentage of children from unchurched backgrounds are currently in your congregation?
2. What steps do you take (or can you take) to reach those children at their level of understanding?
3. What improvements can be made among your children's workers to better reach children at their different levels of understanding?