

Childhood (6–12 Years Old)

INTRODUCTION: “CHILDHOOD”

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people” (Luke 2:52).

1. Areas

- a. Since *Jesus increased in wisdom*, parents should nurture their children’s *intellects*.
- b. Since *Jesus increased in stature*, parents should help their children to *prepare their bodies* for the rigors and discipline of labor and service.
- c. Since *Jesus increased in favor with God*, parents should nurture their children’s *spiritual growth*.
- d. Since *Jesus increased in favor with men*, parents should nurture their children *socially*.

2. Aims

- a. Spiritual nurture’s first aim is to establish the child in patterns of upright behavior.
- b. Spiritual nurture’s second and greater aim is to establish them in true godliness.

3. Activities

- a. Spiritual nurture requires parents to depend upon the grace of God.
- b. Spiritual nurture requires parents—while depending upon God’s grace—to actively do their duty.

ADDRESS THE HEART

“A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart” (Luke 6:45).

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DEVELOP CHARACTER

1. Dealing less with defiance and dealing more with the need for growth in character.
2. Need for a long-term vision.
3. Interpret their behavior in categories of character.

INSTRUCT AND APPEAL TO THE CONSCIENCE

THREE-PRONGED TOOL OF DIAGNOSIS

1. The child in relationship to God
2. The child in relationship to himself
3. The child in relationship to others

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DISCERNING SALVATION

1. Overview

- a. Becoming a Christian is a simple act of faith.

“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” (Rom. 10:9).

- b. Being a Christian means that simple faith expresses itself in the evidence of a changed life.

“My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples” (John 15:8).

“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death” (2 Cor. 7:10).

2. How do you discern whether saving faith is present or not?

- a. You are NOT the Holy Spirit.
- b. You have been GIVEN the Holy Spirit.

Confession of Faith – Repentance and Faith

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15).

Fruit of Faith – Obedience and Love

“Now this is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as he commanded us. 24 The one who keeps his commands remains in him, and he in him. And the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he has given us” (1 John 3:23–24).

“[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7).

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3. Ten Marks of Regeneration (Andy Davis)

- a. Love for God and for Christ
- b. Love for Christian brothers/sisters
- c. Growth in obedience to God's commands
- d. Love for God's word
- e. Growth in hatred of sin/evil
- f. Actual temptations refused, increasing victories over sin
- g. Growth in good deeds done in service to God and others
- h. Ability to explain the gospel, especially the facts of Jesus' life and the key issue of substitutionary atonement (though not necessarily in those words)
- i. Some understanding of "counting the cost"
- j. Internal testimony of the Holy Spirit that we are God's children

4. Ten Thoughts on Evangelizing Your Children (Randy Stinson)

- a. Share your testimony/faith story with kids.
- b. Pray for kids to be saved and never give up.
- c. Be listening for spiritual questions and spiritual moments.
- d. Answer spiritual questions truthfully and simply.
- e. Use the Bible when sharing with kids.
- f. Look for genuine conviction of sin and desire to repent.
- g. Encourage kids to take steps.
- h. Don't pressure them; let kids come to Christ at their own pace.
- i. Let the church help.
- j. Always be talking about God in everything we do.

5. Baptism and Church Membership

- a. Credible testimony in the home
- b. Credible testimony in the church

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Some wrongly say: "Do not teach your children; they will be converted in God's own time if it be his purpose, therefore leave them to run wild in the streets," will certainly both "sin against the child" and the Lord Jesus. We might as well say, "If that piece of ground is to grow a harvest, it will do so if it be God's good pleasure; therefore leave it, and let the weeds spring up and cover it; do not endeavor for a moment to kill the weeds, or to sow the good seed." Why, such reasoning as this would be not only cruel to our children, but grievously displeasing to Christ. Parents! I do hope you are all endeavoring to bring your children to Christ by teaching them the things of God. Let them not be strangers to the plan of salvation. Never let it be said that a child of yours reached years in which his conscience could act, and he could judge between good and evil, without knowing the doctrine of the atonement, without understanding the great substitutionary work of Christ. Set before your child life and death, hell and heaven, judgment and mercy, his own sin, and Christ's most precious blood; and as you set these before him, labor with him, persuade him, as the apostle did his congregation, with tears and weeping, to turn unto the Lord; and your prayers and supplications shall be heard so that the Spirit of God shall bring them to Jesus" (Charles Spurgeon, "Children Brought to Christ and Not to the Font").

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "A Call to Teenagers to be Free" by John Piper at desiringgod.org/articles/a-call-to-teenagers-to-be-free