

WordAction's

# My Best Friend, Jesus



## LEADER'S GUIDE

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# SECTION I

## Leading a Child to Christ

### Introduction

Leading a child to Christ is a special privilege for a children's worker. Statistics show the majority of conversions take place between the ages of 4 and 14. The increase of evil forces pressuring today's children makes it imperative to win them to Christ early. The Bible says, ". . . he who wins souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30, NIV)." We are especially wise when we help children enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. An early relationship with Jesus may keep them from marring or destroying their lives.

This manual tells how to use *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet with children who respond to a salvation invitation. Children make this important decision in various settings. Many come to the altar during children's worship, an adult revival, Kids' Crusade, or children's camp. However, some are saved in a Sunday School class, during a home evangelism call, or after conversation with a trusted adult friend. Throughout this manual, the term **altar** is used for illustration. However, the procedures described fit any setting where a child comes to Christ.

The following suggestions will help you use this guide most effectively.

1. Read it carefully. Study each page of *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet, noting the procedures and conversation suggested for that page.
2. You should not memorize the suggested conversation or use this manual when you counsel a child. Instead, try to remember the major ideas. Then, as you counsel, express those ideas in your own words.
3. Practice the procedures and conversation with an adult friend. Take turns using *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet with one another.
4. If you find it hard to remember major ideas, lightly pencil some notes on a copy of *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet. Keep that copy in your Bible, purse or pocket, ready for use whenever you counsel a child.

### Working with the Child

When discussing the steps in leading someone to Jesus Christ, it can sound very mechanical. However, before the mechanics can succeed, God's Holy Spirit must be present. Only the Holy Spirit can bring conviction or give assurance of salvation. The Spirit also directs

your words and actions. He has been working long before you kneel with the child, and He will continue working after you are finished.

When a boy or girl comes to an altar to pray, kneel beside him or her and pray silently for a few moments. Wait until the child looks up before you begin talking. Begin by asking the child's name if you don't know it. Then, call the child by name and ask, **(Child's name), why have you come to pray?** This type of conversation does not take away from God's call on the child's life. It simply keeps you from praying for children to "be saved" if they came to pray for another purpose.

If the child does not look up or acknowledge your presence in a reasonable length of time, touch the child gently to gain attention. Ask, **Is there something I can pray about with you?** When the child responds "yes," ask, **Why have you come to pray?**

If you discover the child did not come to pray for salvation, don't force the issue. The child probably is not spiritually ready to commit to Christ. Leading through the steps of salvation before a child is ready may actually hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. Instead, pray together about the expressed need, and assure the child that God heard the prayer.

Children seeking salvation usually express this in a way you can recognize. They may say something such as "I want Jesus to be my best Friend" or "I want to be a Christian." Some children will mention a specific wrongdoing for which they feel guilty and ashamed.

If the child appears to sense a need for salvation, begin counseling. Open *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet (not this manual), and place it where the child can see it.

Except as noted, read the statement in large print first (on the page to the child's right). Afterwards, read the Bible verse from the bottom of the page. Then, explain the concept and verse(s) as needed. The ideas given in this manual should help you. But remember—don't try to memorize them word-for-word. Use wording that is natural for you.

Periodically stop and ask, **Do you understand this?** If the child doesn't understand, go over the material again to clarify. If the child says "I think so," move on to the next page. Or, ask the child to tell you in his or her own words what you have just said.

The pages which follow take you completely through the *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet. At the end, you will find instructions to guide the child in a prayer of confession and trust. However, as you go through the book, respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your situation. Some children may be ready to

Only the Spirit  
can bring  
conviction or  
give assurance  
of salvation.

pray before you reach the end of the booklet. Don't be tied to a specific form or plan; work with each child as an individual.

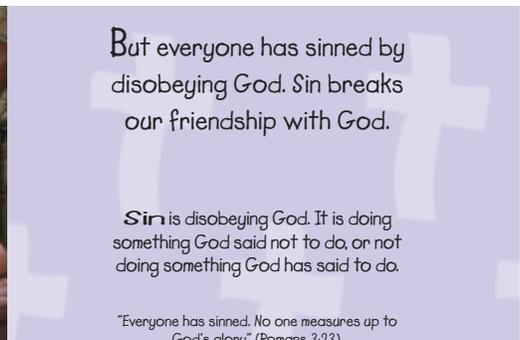
The steps outlined here do not take a long time. Do not try to stretch out the discussion on any page. Remain attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading as you talk and pray with the child. God will bless your availability, and you will experience the privilege of leading a child to Christ.



Read, **God loves all people. He wants to have a loving friendship with them.**

Say, **God loves everyone, and that includes [insert child's name].** Say, **1 John 4:16** says, read, **"We know that God loves us. We depend on it. God is love."**

Say, **No one else loves you as much as God.**



Read, **But everyone has sinned by disobeying God. Sin breaks our friendship with God.**

**Sin is disobeying God. It is doing something God said not to do, or not doing something God has said to do.**

Say, **Lying, cheating, and stealing are sins because God has told us not to do them. We also sin when we know God wants us to do something, and we don't do it.**

Ask, **Do you understand what sin is?** Allow the child to answer. If necessary, review the material again.

Say, **Romans 3:23** says, then read, **"Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory."**

Say, **This means that you and I have sinned. When God first created human beings, they were exactly the way He wanted them. Then those first people disobeyed God. Because of their sin, “No one measures up to God’s glory,” just like the verse says.**

Ask, **Do you understand this?** If the child does not understand explain this material again. Then ask, **Have you sinned?** The child should respond yes if he or she understands the concept.



God loves us very much. He sent His Son, Jesus, to show us His love. Jesus came as a baby. He was God’s one and only Son.

“How did God show his love for us? He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him” (1 John 4:9).



Say, **There is only one person in all of history who has never sinned. That person is Jesus.**

Read, **God loves us very much. He sent His Son, Jesus, to show us His love. Jesus came as a baby. He was God’s one and only Son.**

Say, **Jesus was God’s plan to bring us forgiveness. Let me read you 1 John 4:9, then read, “How did God show his love for us? He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him.”**

Say, **God wanted to show us how much He loves us. He sent Jesus so that we could be forgiven for our sins.**



Jesus grew to be a man. He told everyone about God’s love for them.

- Jesus showed people how to love God and each other.
- He always showed love to children.

“Jesus asked the children to come to him. ‘Let the little children come to me,’ he said. ‘Don’t keep them away. God’s kingdom belongs to people like them’ (Luke 18:16).

Read, **Jesus grew to be a man. He told everyone about God’s love for them. Jesus showed people how to love God and each other. He always showed love to children.**

Say, **Luke 18:16 says, Then read, “Jesus asked the children to come to him. ‘Let the little children come to me,’ he said. ‘Don’t keep them away. God’s kingdom belongs to people like them.’”**

Say, **Jesus wanted to come to earth because He loves us very much. He wants to help you know that God loves you. He also wants you to have a friendship with God.**



Jesus did many loving things to show people He is God's Son.

- He fed hungry people.
- He healed sick people.
- He made dead people alive again.

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues. He preached the good news of the kingdom. And he healed every illness and sickness" (Matthew 9:35).



Say, **Jesus is very special. He is God's one and only Son.**

Read, **Jesus did many loving things to show people He is God's Son. He fed hungry people. He healed sick people. He made dead people alive again.**

Should children become distracted, and talk about God not healing someone, listen carefully. Assure them that God does not always answer prayer the way we would like, and then gently guide the conversation back.

Read, **Matthew 9:35 says, "Jesus went through all the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues. He preached the good news of the kingdom. And He healed every illness and sickness."**

Say, **Many people loved Jesus.**



Some people did not love Jesus.

- They did not like His teachings.
- They did not believe He is God's Son.

These people decided to kill Jesus. This was necessary because He had come to die for the sins of all people.

"Jesus began to explain to his disciples what would happen to him. He told them he must go to Jerusalem. There he must suffer many things from the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law. He must be killed and on the third day rise to life again" (Matthew 16:21).

Read, **But some people did not love Jesus. They did not like His teachings. They did not believe He is God's Son. These people decided to kill Jesus. This was necessary because He had come to die for the sins of all people.**

Say, **God knew from the beginning Jesus would be killed. Jesus also knew. He warned His disciples about it.**

Read, **"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples what would happen**

to him. He told them he must go to Jerusalem. There he must suffer many things from the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law. He must be killed and on the third day rise to life again” (Matthew 16:21).



Jesus died so all people can be forgiven and live as God's friends. Jesus died for you because He loves you.

**Forgive** means to treat someone who has done something wrong as if he or she had not done wrong.

"Here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).



Say, **Because everyone has sinned, they deserve to die for their sins. We deserve to die for our sins, but Jesus provided a way out.**

Read, **Jesus died so all people can be forgiven and live as God's friends. Jesus died for you because He loves you.**

Say, **Jesus' death means that you can be forgiven for all your sins.**

Read, **Forgive means to treat someone who has done something wrong as if he or she had not done wrong.**

Say, **Let's say that your best friend does something to hurt your feelings. If you really forgive him or her, you don't continually remind him or her about how badly he or she treated you. When you forgive, you begin treating your friend as if it never happened.**

Read, **Romans 5:8 says, "Here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**

Say, **Because of Jesus' death, God forgives us. He treats us as though we had never sinned.**



But the best part is that God brought Jesus back to life. Many people saw Him and talked with Him. Later, Jesus returned to His Father in heaven.

"The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead" (Acts 5:30, niv).

Read, **But the best part is that God brought Jesus back to life. Many people saw Him and talked with Him. Later, Jesus returned to His Father in heaven. Acts 5:30 (NIV) says,**

**“The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead.”**

Say, **Because God raised Jesus from the dead, you can live in a way that pleases God. You can be forgiven for your sins. You can know that, someday, you are going to heaven to be with Jesus.**



Jesus is alive today! He loves you and wants to be your Savior and best Friend. We call Jesus our Savior because He died for our sins and helps us live the way God wants us to live.

Do you want Jesus to become your Savior and best Friend right now?



Read, **Jesus is alive today! He loves you and wants to be your Savior and best Friend. We call Jesus our Savior because He died for our sins and helps us live the way God wants us to live.**

Say, **Do you understand this?**

Be careful to use terms the child understands. Terms like “Lord” and “Savior” are familiar to people in the Church. If you use these terms, you must define them so the child understands them. As Lord, Jesus is the ruler and leader of our life. As Savior, Jesus is the one who forgives our sins.

Read, **Do you want Jesus to become your Savior and best Friend right now?**

If the child answers “yes,” proceed to the following page. If the child answers “no,” you will want to probe a little deeper. Occasionally, a child will not be ready to pray. This does not mean he or she is resisting God. More likely it indicates one of these snags:

- The child does not understand how to become a Christian. Ask, **Do you understand how to become a Christian?** If the child answers no, go over the plan of salvation again.
- The child may be experiencing doubt. Some children may believe themselves “so bad” that God can not forgive them. If the child previously became a Christian and failed, he or she may believe that God cannot forgive again. Ask, **Is there a problem that keeps you from wanting Jesus to be your Savior?** Then deal with the issue the child mentions.
- The child may be embarrassed to pray aloud. The child may believe he or she must confess past sins to you. The child may not know how to pray. Be ready to guide the child’s prayer. Assure the child that confession of sins needs to be to God only.



Here is what you need to do:  
**Admit** (tell God) you have disobeyed God.  
Romans 3:23

**Believe** God loves you and sent His Son, Jesus, to make it possible for you to be forgiven. Ask for and receive God's forgiveness. John 3:16

**Claim** Jesus as your Savior and best Friend. Begin to live as a child of God. Romans 10:13

**Claim** means to know for sure that Jesus is YOUR Savior.

Read, **Here is what you need to do: ADMIT you have disobeyed God.**

Say, **You must tell God you have sinned, and you want forgiveness. Some people don't want to do this. They say, "I'm not that bad," or "I'm no worse than other people." The Bible in Romans 3:23 (NIV) says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." When we tell God about our sins, we call it "confessing our sins."**

**Admitting also means you must stop sinning and begin obeying God. Imagine you are walking down Main Street. You realize you are walking the wrong way. What would you do?** Allow the child to answer. **That's right, you would turn around and go the right direction. God wants us to do the same thing spiritually. We call that "repenting." We have been disobeying God, but now we begin to obey Him. Do you understand this?** If the child does not understand the concepts of admitting and repenting of sin, review the concepts again.

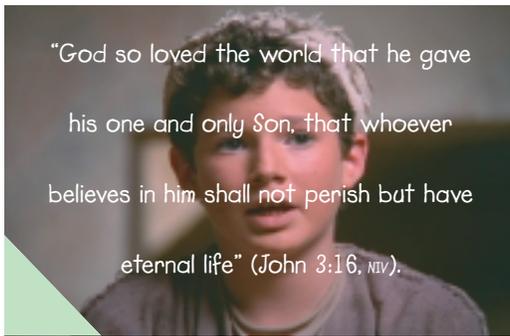
Read, **BELIEVE God loves you and sent His Son, Jesus, to make it possible for you to be forgiven. Ask for and receive God's forgiveness.**

Ask, **Do you believe that God loves you?** Give the child opportunity to answer. If the child does not believe God loves him or her, share John 3:16 (NIV), "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." **He loves you so much He sent His Son, Jesus, to make forgiveness possible. Jesus suffered and died on the cross for your sins. Because of Jesus you can be forgiven. All you need to do is ask God to forgive you and believe He will do it. In 1 John 1:9 (NIV) God has promised to forgive us if we ask Him. It says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." After you have received God's forgiveness then you can...**

Read, **CLAIM Jesus as your Savior and best Friend, and begin to live as a child of God.**

Say, **Claim means you know for sure that Jesus is YOUR Savior because you believe God has kept His promise to forgive you. Once you know you have been forgiven, you will want to tell others that Jesus is your Savior. Then you will want to obey God and live the way He wants you to live.**

Ask, **Do you understand all of this?** Give the child opportunity to respond, and explain any areas that are unclear.



Pray your own prayer or use this prayer:  
Dear God,  
Thank You for sending Jesus to die on the Cross for the wrong things I have done. I admit I have disobeyed You, and I am sorry. Please forgive me. I want Jesus to be my Savior and best Friend. Help me to obey You every day. I believe You have forgiven me.  
Thank You. Amen



Say, **I am going to pray for you. Then I want you to pray asking God to forgive your sins, become your Savior and best Friend, and help you live an obedient life to Him. If you need help with the prayer, I can help you.** Pray a short prayer thanking God for the child and for his or her willingness to ask for forgiveness. Encourage the child to pray. As the child prays, you may need to prompt. Use the following prayer to guide you in leading the child in a prayer for forgiveness.

**Dear God, Thank You for sending Jesus to die on the Cross for the wrong things I have done. I admit I have disobeyed You, and I am sorry. Please forgive me. I want Jesus to be my Savior and best Friend. Help me to obey You everyday. I believe You have forgiven me. Thank You. Amen**



Here is how to help your friendship with Jesus grow. Remember! Jesus, your best Friend, is with you and in you.

1. Learn more about God from His book, the Bible.
2. Talk to God often.
  - Thank Him for sending Jesus.
  - Ask Him to help you always obey God.
3. Tell others about your Friend, Jesus.
4. Go to church to meet with other friends of God.
5. If you feel you have disobeyed God, ask for forgiveness right away. Then keep on living as God's friend.

WordAction's **My Best Friend, Jesus**

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After the child prays, say, **I am so glad you prayed.** Then ask, **What has Jesus done for you?** By asking this question you avoid putting words in the child's mouth or giving credit for an experience he or she did not have. The child who has experienced conversion will respond with something like, "Jesus forgave my sins," "Jesus is my best Friend now," or "Jesus is with me now."

Reinforce the experience by assuring the child that God promises to hear us when we pray. Emphasize that God has heard and forgiven the child.

Say, **Now that you are a child of God, Jesus is with you all the time. Here are some suggestions to help your friendship with Jesus grow.**

Read, **Learn more about God from His book, the Bible.**

Say, **We must read from God's word daily. Just like you need food to grow strong and healthy, the Bible is spiritual food. Reading the Bible will help you know God better.** If the children are non-readers, suggest the parent(s) read to them from an age-appropriate Bible.

Read, **Talk with God often. Thank Him for sending Jesus. Ask Him to help you always choose to obey God.**

Say, **Prayer is very important. You are talking with God. Try to talk with God every day. Thank Him for sending Jesus to be your Savior and for the help He gives you. Pray for your family and friends. You can pray about anything, anytime, and anywhere.**

Read, **Tell others about your Friend, Jesus.**

Say, **Now that Jesus is your best Friend, it is important to tell others what God has done in your life. Tell your pastor, children's pastor, parent(s), friends, and others that Jesus is your Savior.**

Read, **Go to Church to meet with other friends of God.**

Say, **Jesus began the Church to help people grow closer to God together. It is important to meet with other Christians. God uses other people, our pastor, and our Sunday School teachers to help learn more about Him.**

Read, **If you feel you have disobeyed God, ask for forgiveness right away. Then keep on living as God's friend.**

Say, **God wants a continuing friendship with you. If you sin and disobey God, He is willing to forgive you. All you need to do is repent. God will help you grow closer to Him.**

To help the child remember his or her commitment, print the child's name and date on the *Basic Bible Studies Commitment Card*.

*Basic Bible Studies Commitment Cards* may be ordered from WordAction Publishing Company. They are used as spiritual birth certificates for children. Explain that you are printing his or her name and date as a reminder of the decision to become Jesus' friend. Allow the child to keep the *My Best Friend, Jesus* booklet and commitment card. Before he or she leaves, offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the child's conversion.

## SECTION II

# Following Up the Child's Decision

Conversion is only part of a child's spiritual journey. Failure to provide follow-up is as serious as refusing to feed a newborn baby. Spiritual starvation and failure are almost sure to result. Effective follow-up will help the child who may lack assurance of salvation and will encourage him or her to remain true to following Jesus. If a child does something wrong, he or she will likely think salvation is lost. The child may give up entirely, or at least until the next instance where he can "get saved" again.

*So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* is a program designed to ground children in their faith. This five-week series of booklets helps children as they begin to unpack their salvation experience. Teaching them how to live as a Christian and experience the ongoing joy of living in right relationship with Jesus Christ.

*So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* is a complete basic Bible study for children available from WordAction Publishing Company.

- This self-contained packet contains five 8-page booklets in a colorful appealing format for children.

- Available online is a free downloadable that gives the information needed to use the Bible study with children.

- *Commitment card.* The full-color card has a picture of Jesus on the front. On the back are spaces to personalize with the child's name and date of conversion along with an assurance verse.

Any committed Christian adult who understands and loves children can disciple a child by using *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* This may be a parent or adult acquaintance within the church family. Be sure to follow appropriate child safety standards. If an adult other than a parent is leading the Bible study, children should be disciplined in a setting with two or more adults. In situations where many children become Christians at the same time, the Bible study can be used in a classroom setting.

### **Follow these steps when a child becomes a follower of Jesus Christ:**

1. Immediately after a child's conversion, give his or her name to the person responsible for follow-up with children. This may be a children's director, children's pastor, personal evangelism director, Sunday School teacher, or the pastor.

2. Contact the child's family to express joy over the child's conversion and to offer the Bible study. If parent(s) agree to allow the child to participate, immediately offer the parent the *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* packet or arrange for a mentor for the child.

3. Visit the child within 24-48 hours or no more than a week. This is a crucial time period in the life of a new Christian. The child needs the immediate encouragement and support of his or her Christian family.

If the child's parent(s) agree to let him or her go through the Bible study with a mentor, the leader should visit. If parent(s) plan to disciple their own child, deliver the *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* packet for the child and a copy of the downloadable leader's guide.

4. During the home visit:

\*Talk with the child and parent(s) about the decision the child made to follow Jesus. If the parent(s) are not Christians, you will need to explain what this decision means.

\*If you have not already done so, give the child a *commitment card*.

\*Talk with the child, affirming his or her salvation. If he or she is struggling, review the *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet with the child. Pray with the child.

\*Check to see if the child has a Bible. Offer to provide one if he or she does not.

\*Assure the child he or she can call you with questions or if he or she needs to talk with an adult friend. Be careful to maintain appropriate boundaries with the child. Review any child safety procedures with the parent(s) so they are comfortable with the relationship you are establishing with their child.

5. Alert the child's Sunday School teacher. Encourage the teacher to contact the child to affirm joy with the child on his or her salvation decision. The teacher should also pray for the child regularly.

### **Nurturing the Child Whose Parent(s) Are Not Christians**

It may be the case that non-Christian parent(s) may not be comfortable allowing their child to participate in a Bible study. If so, the church must respect the parents' decision and abide by it.

In this situation, the church's opportunities to disciple the child will be limited—at least at first. Here are some things that can be done.

1. If the child attends Sunday School, the teacher should be told about the conversion and be encouraged to do the following:

\*Pray for the child.

\*Encourage the child in his or her Christian walk by sharing ideas from *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* when talking with the child.

\*Relate truths from the Sunday School lessons to the child's Christian life.

2. The church should continue to use every possible opportunity to visit the child and the parent(s). Invite the child and the parent(s) to church events where children will be present.

3. Some parent(s) may refuse to let the child come to Sunday School. If so, enlist several individuals to pray regularly for the child and the family. Pray that God will help the child remain true to his or her commitment, and that the parents' attitude will change. Be alert to opportunities to minister to the family.

Under no circumstances should Sunday School teachers or others encourage the child to disobey the parent(s) or go behind their backs, even to come to church. This will only strain family relationships and create antagonism toward the church—all of which will harm the child spiritually in the long run. Remain faithful in praying for the situation, and then depend on the Holy Spirit to be at work in the child's life and the parent(s).

## **Conclusion**

The importance of winning children to Christ cannot be overemphasized. You are not the first to bring grace into the child's life, and you will not be the last. But you may be privileged to reap the harvest of a young soul. Be prepared. Practice leading a child to Christ so that when the opportunity arrives you are ready. God's kingdom will be enriched because of your preparedness.



# Prayer and Praise Diary

Below, list the names of children for whose salvation you are praying. Before the name, write the date you begin praying. When the child accepts Jesus as Savior, write that date in the space after the child's name.

Prayer Begun	Child's Name	Received Christ

This chart may be reproduced for use in the local church.



## Section III

# Guide for “The Story of Jesus for Children” DVD

### Introducing “The Story of Jesus for Children” Video at Home

*The Story of Jesus for Children* makes it possible for children of all ages to see and understand the true story of Jesus. This story is adapted from the Gospel of Luke in the Bible. Children of all ages viewing this DVD have come to know and better understand Jesus and His love.

The portrayed events of Jesus’ life are all true. The children in the DVD are actors. They show what boys and girls who lived in A.D. 30 may have said and done as they saw and heard about Jesus.

### Where to show this DVD

This DVD was created for children of all ages. Some places and times you can use this DVD are:

- In your home. Consider inviting children in your neighborhood to join your children in watching the DVD.
- At a meeting of homeschooling groups
- During an after-school club meeting
- At a children’s party

### How to use this DVD

#### MAKE YOUR PLAN

- Pray. Ask God to use this DVD to help children you know to understand the message of *The Story of Jesus for Children*. Ask God to help the children want to seek Jesus as Savior.
- Decide when you will show the DVD and what children you will include. If you invite children from the neighborhood or another group, you may want to serve refreshments.
- Read the salvation booklet, *My Best Friend, Jesus*. If possible, order extra copies of the booklet to give to children. Photocopy “My ‘Friendship with Jesus’ Reminder” cards to give to children as needed.
- Know what you will do if children choose to ask Jesus into their lives.

## **INTRODUCE THE DVD**

Explain that this DVD shows the true story of Jesus when He lived on earth. We know that Jesus loved children. The Bible does not tell us what the boys and girls said and did, but this DVD shows what might have happened.

## **SHOW THE DVD**

Show the complete DVD. Be sure to include the summary by Benjamin and the prayer of commitment at the end.

## **COMPLETE THE DVD**

Talk to the children about what they have just seen. Give children an opportunity to accept Jesus as Savior. Use *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet to help you talk with the children. If possible, give each child a personal copy of the salvation booklet. Encourage children to attend a church that teaches the truth about Jesus. If you received this DVD from a church, you may want to recommend they attend that church.

*The Story of Jesus for Children* will help you answer these and other questions children may ask. However, you do not have to be an expert in these matters. When you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Then join with the children in searching for an answer. Your pastor or Sunday School teacher are good resource persons to help you.

## **Introducing “The Story of Jesus for Children” DVD at Church**

*The Story of Jesus for Children* DVD makes it possible for children of all ages to see and understand the true story of Jesus. This story is adapted from the Gospel of Luke in the Bible. Children of all ages viewing this DVD have come to know and better understand Jesus and His love.

The portrayed events of Jesus' life are all true. The children in the DVD are actors. They show what boys and girls who lived in A.D. 30 may have said and done as they saw and heard about Jesus.

## Where to show this DVD

This DVD was created for children of all ages. Some places and times you can use this DVD are:

- At your local church. Make this a significant children's ministries event and invite children from neighborhoods surrounding your church.
- In homes. Ask church members to invite neighborhood children to join their children in watching the DVD.
- At a meeting of homeschooling groups.
- During an after-school meeting
- At a children's party
- During Sunday School, children's church, or on a weekday

## How to use this DVD

### MAKE YOUR PLAN

- Watch *The Story of Jesus for Children* so you know its content.
- Raise awareness in your church of the importance of *The Story of Jesus for Children* DVD. Point out that most conversions occur during the childhood years.
- Pray. Mobilize people in your church to pray for all aspects of the ministry of *The Story of Jesus for Children*. Ask them to pray especially:
  - that God will help children to understand the message of *The Story of Jesus for Children*
  - that children will respond to the invitation to ask Jesus to live with them and in them.
- Decide when and where you will show the DVD and what children you will invite. Plan each showing carefully. Particularly plan what you will do if children respond to the invitation to ask Jesus into their lives.
- Recruit and train workers for each DVD showing. Show *The Story of Jesus for Children*. Introduce workers to the salvation booklet, *My Best Friend, Jesus* and discuss how you will use it. Do the same for the commitment card.
- Order extra copies of *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet to give to children.
- Decide how and when you will obtain the names and addresses of children who attend each DVD showing.
- Plan for follow-up with each child who attends.

## **INTRODUCE THE DVD**

Explain that this DVD shows the true story of Jesus when He lived on earth. We know that Jesus loved children. The Bible does not tell us what the boys and girls said and did, but this DVD shows what might have happened.

## **SHOW THE DVD**

Show the complete DVD. Be sure to include the summary by Benjamin and the prayer of commitment at the end.

## **COMPLETE THE DVD**

Talk to the children about what they have just seen. Give them an opportunity to invite Jesus to be their Savior. Use *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet to help you talk with the children. If possible, give each child his or her own copy of the booklet. Encourage the children to attend your church so they can grow in their friendship with God and with other Christians.

## **FOLLOW UP THE DVD**

Thorough follow-up is essential to ensure long-term spiritual results from *The Story of Jesus for Children*. Make every effort to remain in contact with the children who saw the DVD, and with their families. Here are some suggested steps to take:

- Visit the home of every child who saw the DVD.
- Ask parents for permission to enroll their children in a Sunday School class. If the parents agree, place the children's names on the correct Sunday School responsibility list. Urge Sunday School teachers to make frequent contacts with the children and their families.
- Give every home a personal copy of *The Story of Jesus for Children*.
- Enroll all children who made a spiritual commitment in *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* This five-week basic Bible study will help children be grounded in faith. It also teaches them how to live out this new commitment to Christ in everyday life.

## Section IV

# The Salvation Experience for Young Children

by Melissa Hammer

Do young children really understand what it means to be a Christian? Can young children experience salvation? Are they ready for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? These are all questions I have been asked and that I have asked myself. And, just as each child is unique the answer varies for each one.

I was nine before I was ready to make that salvation step. I heard about and considered it. In fact, I considered it at great length. I remember wondering, “Am I ready to make a decision about something that will change my life forever?” It was a Wednesday evening of Vacation Bible School before I confidently said, “Yes!” However, I have a good friend whose son was about the age of four when he said, “Mommy, I am ready for Jesus to be my Friend for always.” She prayed with him, and today he is a confident believer, eager to share his faith with others.

There are stories of men and women who God spoke to at the ages of three, four, five, and six. These men and women can tell of their salvation with confidence, knowing that God changed their lives as young children. For each person who believed as a young child, I believe it is vital that we address the specific salvation needs of preschoolers and kindergartners. ***The ABCs of Salvation*** is a good starting point. However, I would expand ***The ABCs of Salvation*** to include five steps for a one-on-one conversation with young children. The salvation experience at this age is more likely to happen in an intimate relationship between one child and a parent, or one child and a trusted adult (like a pastor or Sunday School teacher). So, as the Holy Spirit leads, and as children express genuine remorse for sin, and a desire for relationship with Christ, you can be prepared to walk with them through the most important decision they will make. A decision that transforms their future!

Steps to Salvation using *The ABCs of Salvation* as a Pattern

**ADMIT you have sinned (done wrong; disobeyed God) (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:9).**

Step 1: As a child expresses interest in knowing Jesus as a Friend and wants to tell God, “I am sorry” ask, **Do you love Jesus?** If the child answers “Yes,” proceed.

Step 2: Ask the child, **Do you know Jesus loves you?** If the child answers “Yes,” proceed.

Step 3: Say to the child, **God does love you and that is why He sent His Son, Jesus.**

**God does not want you to sin or do wrong things. God wants you to love and obey Him. God wants you to do what He teaches His people to do. Do you want to tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you have done?** If the child answers “Yes,” help the child to pray expressing sorrow for sin and telling God that he or she is willing to stop doing wrong and choose to obey Him.

**BELIEVE God loves you and sent His Son, Jesus, to save you from your sins (John 3:16; Acts 16:31).**

Step 4: After you have helped the child pray for forgiveness, say, **You can know that God loves and forgives you. The Bible tells us God loves us.** Help the child pray and thank God for His love and for His Son, Jesus. Help the child pray, **Thank You, God, for Your love and forgiveness. I choose to love You, God. I will learn more about You from the Bible. I will pray and talk with You. I will do what You want me to do. Thank You, God, for Your Son, Jesus. I love Jesus. He is my best Friend. Amen.**

**CLAIM Jesus as your Savior (Romans 10:13).**

Step 5: It is important for the child to tell you about his or her experience. First, ask the child to talk with you about what he or she just chose. Then, say to the child, **Today you did something very important. You chose to love God. You chose to love Jesus, God’s Son, as your Friend. You made a choice to do what God wants you to do. You do not have to do wrong things. You can know that God will help you make right choices. You can pray and talk to Him every day. You can know Jesus is your Friend, and He is with you.**

Conclude your conversation by allowing the child to express thanks to God for His love and for Jesus.

At this point, it is important for family members and church leaders to know what has happened in the life of the child. You need to personally talk to the parent(s), pastor, children’s pastor, children’s director, and Sunday School teacher about the child’s salvation experience. Then, arrange a time to help the child talk to these important people about his or her relationship with God. Pray for the child each day, and continue to encourage the child in Christian growth by sharing Bible stories, Bible verses, and Bible truths. Young children can know Jesus as Friend and Savior. They can be disciples for Him each day, learning about Him and sharing His love with others. God is great and in His greatness offers salvation for all people, including young children.

## Section V Evangelism and Follow-Up Resources

### Resources For Purchase

#### ***MY BEST FRIEND, JESUS SALVATION BOOKLET***

A booklet to use in leading children to Christ; to give to children when they accept Christ; to help children share Christ with others. Colorful. Illustrated. Easy to follow.

**JFSB-3000, pkg. of 10**

#### ***SO . . . YOU WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS?***

A series of five booklets designed to help the newly-saved child understand what it means to be a Christian and discover how to live out his or her relationship with Christ. Designed primarily for the elementary children but may be used with younger children one-on-one.

**CD-3206**

#### **FREE DOWNLOADABLE LEADER'S GUIDE**

A leader's guide for adults mentoring children in their faith. Step-by-step instructions for using *So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?* Visit online to download at [www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS](http://www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS)

#### ***DISCOVERING MY FAITH***

A catechism curriculum to help children discover the basic beliefs of the church. Children will discover basic Christian beliefs in a way they can understand and make their own. The resource packet contains a leaders guide, and teaching aids to enhance classroom learning.

**Pupil Book, CD-977**

**Teaching Resource Packet, CD-978**

## RESOURCES ON THE WEB

### Connecting a New Generation

The Church of the Nazarene's decade long emphasis on children and youth. This website offers video and PowerPoint resources to challenge your church to reach children and youth with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

[connecting.nazarene.org](http://connecting.nazarene.org)

### The Jesus Film for Children

Learn more about the film on which *My Best Friend, Jesus* salvation booklet was based.

Watch *The Story of Jesus for Children* in 30 different languages. You are also able to purchase copies of the video.

[www.jesusforchildren.org](http://www.jesusforchildren.org)

### JESUS Film Harvest Partners

A ministry of the Church of the Nazarene, Jesus Film Harvest Partners encourages evangelism through the use of the *JESUS Film*. Their work has led to more than 4,000,000 decisions for Christ and 3,500 new churches around the world. You will also find six downloadable discipleship lessons for children. On their menu select "Resources," and then "Discipleship Materials."

[www.jfhp.org](http://www.jfhp.org)

### The JESUS Film

The film that started it all. The *JESUS Film* has been viewed or heard by more than 5,619,497,502 since 1979. It has been translated into more than 840 different languages. Learn more about this organization and view the *JESUS Film* in 60 different languages.

<http://jesusfilm.org>

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## **My “Friendship with Jesus” Reminder**

**(Take this card home to remind you of this special day)**

**Today I did something very important.**

- I asked God to forgive me for the wrong things I have done.
- I asked Jesus to live with me and in me.

**When I prayed, something very special happened.**

- God forgave me.
- Jesus became my best Friend. He lives with me and in me.

**From now on, I am going to live the way God wants me to live.**

- Jesus will help me love and obey God more each day.

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name,  
he gave the right to become children of God.”

John 1:12 (NIV)

## **Jesus, My Best Friend Everyday**

Becoming a friend of Jesus is the most important thing that can happen to a person. This is the best friendship in the world.

- People who become friends with Jesus have different kinds of feelings.
- Some people have lots of happy feelings.
- Some people feel a little mixed up: happy, curious, excited, maybe confused.
- Other people don't feel any different at all.

Don't worry about your feelings. Feelings change easily, for lots of different reasons.

*Believing* is what's most important in your new friendship. Believe these things.

- God promised to forgive you for doing wrong if you would ask Him. God always keeps His promises. You can count on Him! (1 John 1:9)
- If you feel you have disobeyed God, ask for forgiveness right away. Then keep on living as Jesus' friend.
- God is always at work to help you want to please Him, and to do what He wants (Philippians 2:13).

**You are a friend of Jesus.**

**Enjoy this extra-special friendship every day!**