

Version 3
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Say Whaaat?!?

Helping your kids understand salvation,
baptism, and growing their faith



table of contents

Salvation	4
Growing	7
Serving	10
Baptism	13
Appendix	17
All About Me	18
Tough Questions	20
Resources	22

Dear Parents,

What has brought you here? Is it sheer panic because your child has asked you big questions about their faith? Are you worried that you don't have the right answers? Are you new in your faith journey and doubting whether or not you can do this? Let us encourage you—you can! God has specifically designed you to be the parent of your child. It is not an accident that you are a family. He will equip you with exactly what you need. Being a part of your child's faith journey is part of your job description. However, you are not alone. We want to partner with you as you guide your child through these important discussions. You are the one that God designed to disciple your child and help him/her to understand these important truths. Our hope for you is that this book will help give you the tools you need to have these important conversations.

It is our desire is to empower you as you disciple your kids. We want to partner together in the spiritual development of your child. We call this the Orange Philosophy. Imagine that the color yellow represents the light of the church, shining for Jesus. Then imagine that the color red represents the heart of the home. When these two colors come together, it makes a powerful, vibrant color: Orange! This is what it means to, "Think Orange." We think about it all the time. You see, we believe that YOU are the most important influence on your child's spiritual journey. The church's role is to partner with you in this endeavor; presenting Biblical teaching on Sunday mornings in a relevant environment that will serve as a foundation for discussions at home all week. We realize that the church has an average of 40 hours a year with your child, but you have an average of 3,000 hours! When we join together, we are able to make a far greater impact on the life of your child.

We have worked together in a professional setting for three years, but we had these conversations in our family while Beth was growing up. I (Kay) can say that from my perspective, the most important thing for me was to establish a conversation time together. We prioritized talking about God and the Bible and what our kids learned in ministry on Sundays. It wasn't formal or planned, it was an outflow of established patterns and rhythms of our everyday life. Before bed, in the car, over meals, we capitalized on these moments that were natural for us.

For me (Beth), what I remember from beginning conversations about faith with my parents, was that it was a safe topic. I had a lot of questions, some of them, I am sure threw my parents for a loop, but I always knew that it was safe to go to them. That was the thing I was always testing through my childhood: Is it safe? Can I ask my questions? Will my parents love me? The answers to those questions established the foundation of my understanding of who God is.

It is our desire to walk with you as you begin this journey of faith as a family. We had a blast working on this project for you! We hope you find it and our story helpful.

Your Mother/Daughter Ministry team,

Kay Thomas, and Beth Upper

How to use this book



Talk about it

In this section, we give you some helpful information to help you introduce this topic to your child. It should give you clarity and help you in explaining it to your child when the time is right.



Ask it

In this section, we give you specific questions to ask your child. The types of answers you are looking for are in parenthesis. This helps start a dialogue versus a monologue.



Do it

In this section, we give you practical ideas to do with your child, as a family to help bring understanding to the topic. Plus, they are fun! It's important to make Jesus fun in your home.

Authors of this book

Kay Thomas and Beth Upper are the mother and daughter ministry team who authored this book to help you, talk about it, ask it and do it! Some parts are written from their perspective as a mother and daughter team to help communicate the concepts in this book.

Salvation

What is a Christian?

From Beth

“ What I remember as a four year old, was sitting on my bedroom floor and wondering about heaven, hell, and what happens to us after we die. I remember sitting on the floor with my mom as she answered all of my questions. It was partly motivated by the fear of hell, but mostly, I remember wanting to know about Jesus. I had grown up in church and Jesus was a huge part of my childhood. I listened to my parents talk about Him and be excited about Him, and I wanted in. It was a limited understanding and it isn't where I stayed, but that night was the first step.

From Kay

“ What I remember about that night was thinking, “This is it! This is the moment! This is my child!”. We talked about heaven and sin and Jesus. I remember believing that she could handle it. I believed that she was capable of understanding salvation, at least on a child's level. After we walked through the steps, we prayed, and we celebrated. After she went to bed, I remember telling Dan, and we prayed over our kids. It was awesome! I am so glad that I didn't give that moment away. I am so excited still that I was a part of that.

When a child asks about salvation, often we see parents assume that they can't understand, that they somehow aren't mature enough yet to grasp it. This is true. They can't understand it all, but then again, neither can any of us. In Matthew 18: 2-5, Jesus himself commands all of us to come to Him with child-like faith. There is in children the unique perspective of just believing without trying to argue our way out of believing. Your kids may have a clearer understanding of faith than you do. Once they get to make this decision for themselves, it shouldn't stay where it is, it should grow. The idea of growth is something all of us are always pursuing and will never achieve until we meet Jesus face to face. So be bold, and don't worry about messing up your child's eternal salvation. You aren't God, you don't have to be. Just trust God with their heart and be their parent.



Talk about it

All of us do wrong things sometimes, things that make God sad. But God loves us so much, He sent His perfect son to be born as a baby (we celebrate this at Christmas), and He grew up to die on the cross for our sins. He died for all the wrong things we do: the times we disobey, the times we lie, the times we get angry. But He didn't stay dead; He came alive again. We celebrate this at Easter.

The Bible says,

"God so loved the world so much, that He gave His one and only Son. Anyone who believes in Him will not die, but will have eternal life."

JOHN 3:16, NIRV

Jesus died for the people of the world. Oh, how He loves us. When we believe in Him, we will live forever in heaven with Him. To believe means more than just knowing something in your head. It means to truly believe that you have done wrong things, that your wrong things separate you from Him, and that He died on the cross to pay the price for those wrong things. Tell Jesus that you want Him to come into your life and forgive your sins. It also means you are choosing to live for Him.



Ask it

1. **What is heaven like?** (*perfect place where God lives, no sin, no sickness, beautiful, streets of gold, no sadness. Revelation 21:21-27*)
2. **What makes it so we can't get to heaven on our own?** (*sin/wrong things. Romans 6:23*)
3. **Who does these wrong things?** (*all of us, parents, kids, teachers, pastors etc. Romans 3:23*)
4. **What are some examples of sin or wrong things we do?** (*talk about things kids do and things parents do that make God sad. Ephesians 4:31*)
5. **What did Jesus do for us?** (*He died on the cross. Romans 5:8*)
6. **Why did Jesus have to die for us?** (*Jesus died on the cross and shed his blood because the Bible says that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Hebrews 9:22*)

7. **Did He stay dead? What happened?** (*no, He rose again-Easter. 1 Thessalonians 4:14*)
8. **What does God say about it?** (*look up John 3:16 together*)
9. **What does it mean to believe?** (*to know it in your head and believe with all your heart, that Jesus died for me*)
10. **What should we do about it?** (*tell Jesus we are sorry for our sin, that we believe in Him and want to live for Him*)
11. **Pray something like this** (*you can have your child repeat after you*):

Dear Jesus, I am sorry for the wrong things I have done. I believe you are God's perfect son, that you died for me, and that you came alive again. I'm sorry for the wrong things I've done. Come into my life, I want to live for you! Thank you for saving me and making a way for me to live with you in heaven someday! Amen.



Do it

1. **This is the most important decision you can ever make!** You want to remember this day. Write out John 3:16 on a notecard. You may even want to decorate it. Then at the bottom, write the date that you asked Jesus to be your Savior. Get a box (it can be a shoebox that you decorate or a plastic storage container) and put this card inside. Save the box in a special place so you can put more things in it as you learn to follow Jesus.
2. **Flip to the "All About Me" page of this book and begin filling it out.**

Growing

Now What?

From Kay

“When my kids were young, one of the things that was really important to me was a daily devotional time. It was a consistent 15 minutes either in the morning or before bed where we practiced the Bible verse that they were learning in church, read the Storybook Bible together, and even sang some songs from church. We also made it a priority to go to church on Sundays. Because I wanted to keep the long-term in mind, with every faith-related decision, I asked myself, “what habits do I want my kids to keep as they grow up?” Sunday started on Saturday night, my kids picked out their Sunday clothes the night before, I didn’t care what it was because the battle wasn’t worth it.”

From Beth

“I remember requesting one more chorus of “Give Me Oil in My Lamp” before having to go to bed. I remember vaguely having the idea that I didn’t want to go to church, but then realizing that that wasn’t an option because my mom would simply say, “You’re going” and the argument would be over. Looking back, I am so glad my parents had that habit because it is one that I still have today. When it came to having a quiet time, my parents led by example, they went first. My dad was always up in the morning, on the couch, in his robe, with his coffee, and his Bible (in that order). I grew up watching it be a part of my parents’ life and as a kid, I wanted to be just like them.

Parents, if you are freaking out right now, it’s ok. There are many resources for you. Every week there is a Devotion card sent home with a Parent Cue attached to it. It lets you know what your child has learned each week, it has the verse for the month, and it even has discussion questions to help you talk about these things at home. It also points you to some additional verses and resources. Our hope is that you can begin to create patterns that work for your family to help establish the conversation about faith in your home (it could be on the way to soccer practice, over a bowl of cereal in the morning, or even in the grocery cart in the store). The biggest thing we want you to take away is that your kids are watching you and they want to be a part of your life. Don’t worry about making them have a quiet time, do it together, and lead by example. The Devotion card is a great way to enter your child’s world and be a part. We really mean it when we say we want to partner with you in the discipleship of your child!



Talk about it

Now that you have asked Jesus to forgive your sins and told Him you want to follow Him, you are a Christian! Jesus promises in the Bible, in Hebrews 13:5, “I will never leave you...” He loves you and will always be with you. He gives us His Holy Spirit to help us live for Him (John 14:16 &17). He wants to help us make wise choices, trust Him no matter what, and treat others the way we want to be treated. That is why we talk about these things in Definition Kids every week!

But now what? How do you follow Jesus and grow to be more like Him? An important thing to do is to spend time with God every day. We want to help you with this, so we have a great resource that we give out every week. It’s called a Devotion Card! It helps you understand what we talked about on Sunday morning. It’s also fun! When you do your Devotion Card, you read the Bible, think about it, and pray to Jesus. As you review the Bible verse we are memorizing in Definition Kids, you are learning His word! Psalm 119:11 says, “I have hidden your word in my heart, so that I won’t sin against you.”



Ask it

1. **When is a good time to have your Devotion?** *(talk about whether that is in the morning or perhaps before bedtime. The most important thing is to choose a time and stick to it)*
2. **Tell your child about your Devotion. When do you read God’s word? How do you pray?** *(be honest...and if you aren’t doing it, now is a great time to begin!)*
3. **What is the verse you are learning in Definition Kids this month?** *(parents, you might want to memorize it too)*
4. **Do you need help?** *(typically Kindergarteners and first graders need a parent to guide them through their Devotion. By second and third grade, kids are able to do a little more, but still need a parent’s help. By fourth and fifth grade, they can begin to be much more independent. They may even be ready to do more than the Devotion Card)*



Do it

1. **Decide on the place you will have your Devotion each day. Have a place for your Bible and your Devotion card** (*using a magnet on your refrigerator is a great place*).
2. **Decide together with your parents when that special time will be.**
3. **Pray together. Ask God to help you understand and obey His word. Pray for others. Pray for your family. Pray for your Definition Kids leaders, small group leaders, and pastor.**

Serving

Isn't it all about me?

From Beth

“ Growing up, there was an expectation that I would help around the house. Chores were a regular thing, and when I dared to whine and complain, I remember my mom's famous line, “Stop being a globe-head!” I quickly learned that it was not all about me. I watched my parents serve in ministry and while it used to drive me crazy that we always seemed to be the last one at church, I grew up knowing that being an active part of the church body was important and it was part of why, when I was old enough, I started to serve.

From Kay

“ Growing up for me was challenging. I remember knowing that cleaning and cooking etc. was what the kids did. It was difficult and I wanted our family to look different. We did it together. We all had expectations; we all did stuff. I wanted my kids to understand that they were part of this family. When I encountered whining, I handled by saying, “Duly noted” and they were expected to continue. I acknowledged their sadness with the situation, but I was the parent.

Watching your parents serve is an important part of whether or not kids stay in the church once they leave your house and head into adulthood. It doesn't have to be something huge and unattainable, rather it is something you can develop in your own home in a million little ways, as part of your daily rhythm. Kids need to understand that it is not all about them; there are other needs outside of themselves. Parents, you have to be the parent, this is not the stage of your child's life where you are friends. That comes later (like when your kids are grown and you are writing a book together). Right now, the important thing to remember is that this is the moment to establish in your kids a love for people, and the work ethic to do something about it.



talk about it

So, now that you are a Christian, another important part of following Jesus is learning to serve Him by thinking about others. It is not just about gaining lots of knowledge about the Bible, and Jesus, and God. God wants us to love people. He wants us to put others before ourselves. Matthew 22:37-39 talks about how important it is to love God and to love others. We begin by thinking about the people in our family and asking ourselves, how can we serve each other? Then we begin to think outside our home and start asking, how can we serve in our church? How can we serve our community?



ask it

1. **What can you do to serve your family this week?** *(what about doing the dishes, helping pick up the playroom, hang up your wet towel or your brother's wet towel (yuck!))?*
2. **Tell them about how you serve at church and why.** *(where do you serve? If don't serve, this is a great opportunity for you. You serve so that others can come to know Jesus)*
3. **Do we serve others even when we don't feel like it? Why?** *(yes, because God calls us to serve)*
4. **What are some things we can do as a family to serve our community?** *(if you need ideas, check out your campus' service small groups)*

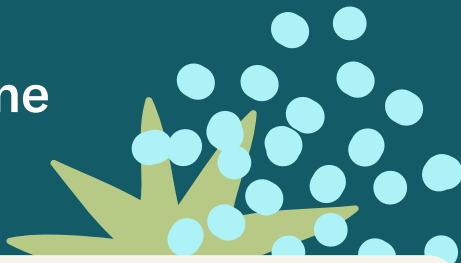


do it

1. **Come up with practical, age appropriate ways to serve your family and do it. Maybe even do it secretly to surprise that family member** *(it's fun! and fun is good).*
2. **Make a list of chores to do each week. Put it in a chart and mark it off with stickers when it's done.**
3. **Take your ideas about how to serve the community and put them into action. Want to serve the homeless? Make up bags of toiletries, perhaps include a gift card to Walmart, and put them in your car so you are ready to hand them out to the next person you see holding a sign. Or collect towels and dog food for the Humane society. Take pictures of whatever you do and put it in your memory box.**
4. **The most important way you can serve someone is to tell them about Jesus. Spend some time as a family sharing how each of you came into a relationship with Him.**

Baptism

How can I let everyone know I love Jesus?



From Kay

“ After Beth was saved, we talked about baptism, and every time I brought it up and asked if she would like to be baptized, she gave me a resounding, “no!”. It wasn’t until later that I realized it was because she was afraid to go backwards in the water without holding her nose. Once we had that figured out, we were able to talk about it more. The decision to be baptized was hers. When she came to Dan and I and said she wanted to be baptized eight years later, all I could think was, “Finally!” (not that she is stubborn or anything).

From Beth

“ I knew about baptism, I understood what it represented, but the idea of sputtering and coughing because I had to go underwater backwards was terrifying at the time (I have irrational fears sometimes). I never felt pressure from my parents, maybe a little bit of guilt, but never pressure. I remember the night I went to my parents and said I felt like I wanted to be baptized, it was conditional: “I would like to get baptized, ONLY if they let me hold my nose.” I watched relief come over my parents as I am sure they thought, “oh good, she really is saved!

Baptism is not salvation and this is an important distinction to make for kids. It’s important for you to not pressure your child, as they might not be ready as quickly as you are. And it is important to talk about it; make sure there is a clear understanding of what baptism is (we hear all the time, a child say, “I got baptized and my sins were washed away” Ahhhh! misunderstanding alert). And be sure to listen to your child, they might have some crazy fears (like going underwater). The bottom line is that this is not salvation and the dialogue about baptism can be a great moment in your relationship with your child.



talk about it

At Definition Church, baptism is a BIG deal. We want to celebrate with everyone who has made the decision to follow Jesus Christ and asked Him to be their Savior. Baptism is a special way to show everyone that you have become a Christian. It is a picture of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Being baptized does not make you a Christian. It shows others that you have already become a Christian and you are following Jesus' command to be baptized. Matthew 3:13-17 tells the story of Jesus' baptism. Acts 2:38 and 41 tell us that after you believe, you should be baptized.

If you want to be baptized at Definition and you are under the age of 12, we ask that you go through this book together with your child. After doing that, if you, as the parent decides your child understands and is ready, you can sign up for the next baptism. You will receive instructions on what to do. On baptism day, invite your friends and relatives to celebrate with you. This is an awesome day!



ask it

- 1. Parents, before you begin talking about baptism, make sure you have gone through the Salvation chapter of this book.**
- 2. Talk to your child about your baptism. If you haven't been baptized yet, consider doing this as a family.**
- 3. Why do you want to be baptized?** *(to tell everyone that I believe in Jesus as my Savior)*
- 4. What picture does baptism give us?** *(Christ's death, burial, and resurrection)*
- 5. Are you ready to be put under water to show that you have become a Christian?**



do it

1. **Watch a baptism service together as a family and talk about it. Talk about practical things like holding your nose as you go backward under the water.**
2. **Sign up for the next baptism service.**
3. **You will receive instructions about baptism** (*what to wear, what time to come etc.*)
4. **At Definition church, you receive a special baptism t-shirt. You wear shorts and bring your towel and flip flops. Someone will take your picture and send it to you after baptism. You can have your family with you when you are baptized.**
5. **Invite your friends and family to come to your baptism service. It is a huge celebration and we all cheer as you walk in.**
6. **During the actual baptism, someone will help you climb the steps into the water. The pastor will help you into the baptismal and ask you if you have received Jesus as your Savior. Then the pastor will say, “it is my privilege to baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” You hold your nose and the pastor will help you go backwards into the water and back up. Then you stand up and feel free to cheer. This is an important day where you are telling everyone that you are a follower of Jesus!**
7. **At Definition Kids we think this is so important, we give you a Bible to mark this special day.**
8. **Once you get your special baptism Bible, be sure to write the date that you asked Jesus to be your Savior in the front.**

appendix

All About Me

Tough Questions

What Now? (Resources)



all about me

Today, _____

I am _____ years old. The name of my church
is _____

My small group leader's name is,

My pastor's name is _____

Who told you about how Jesus died on the cross
for your sins? _____

Write a verse that tells us how to believe in Jesus:

Write the date that you asked Jesus to be your
Savior: _____

Now that you believe in Jesus, what are some ways that you can grow to be more like Him?

Tell about your baptism; what happened and who came to celebrate with you? _____

Write the date that you were baptized:

Tough Questions



How do I know there is really a God? (*Romans 1:19-21*)

All of creation points to a creator. You might hear lots of different things in science class, but those things are hypotheses. The Bible tells us what is true. Sometimes people want to believe they know and understand everything, but we know that only God can understand everything. Believing that God is real and that He is in charge is called faith.

How do I know the Bible is true? (*2 Timothy 3:16*)

God told men what to write. The Bible has 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament. The Old Testament points to Jesus, the New Testament tells us about Jesus and how to live for him. And even though the Bible was written over hundreds of years, it never contradicts itself.

Why do bad things happen? (*Romans 5:12*)

In this world, we have an enemy and that enemy is satan. He wants all of us to be separated from God. He was in heaven with God and decided he wanted to be better than God. When he chose to push God away, God had to tell him to leave heaven. He was in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. He tempted them to disobey God and they did. Sin entered the world through the choice they made and from that time on, we are all born with a “want to” do bad things. The Bible says we all do bad things which is why we needed Jesus.

Why do bad things happen to good people? (*John 16:33*)

Sometimes we just don’t understand things in our lives, especially the bad things. We do know that God is good and that He will always love us. Even when things are hard, and there may not be an answer, we do know that God is with us and He will walk with us through whatever we face. You can trust God no matter what.



Why am I here? (John 10:10)

When you were in your mommy's tummy, God saw you. He knew all about you. He knew what you would look like, what foods you wouldn't like, how many hairs would be on your head. Even before you were born, He had a special job planned that only you could do. There is no one else in the world who is just like you. You are special to Him. He created you with a very special purpose in mind.

Bonus: *(These are real tough questions we have been asked by your kids, on a Sunday morning, in front of a group of children).*

If everyone except Noah's family was destroyed in the flood, who did his kids marry?

Yep. Brothers and sisters got married.

Where do babies come from?

We send them to you, but a good thing to remember as a parent is that "eight is great". Think eight is too young? Think again, at that point, they will hear it from someone else. You should talk to your kids about sex first so that you are the one they come to with questions. Remember to be a safe place. There are lots of resources to help you, 'Passport to Purity' by Dennis and Barbara Rainey is a great one.

Is Santa real? The Easter bunny? The tooth fairy?

This is an important decision for you to make as a family, they are values that will be unique to you. However, also make sure your child understands that other families may make a different decision. We have seen dreams crushed in children's ministry; don't let your child be the dream crusher.

Kid ask all kinds of questions, the biggest things to remember: don't freak out and tell the truth.

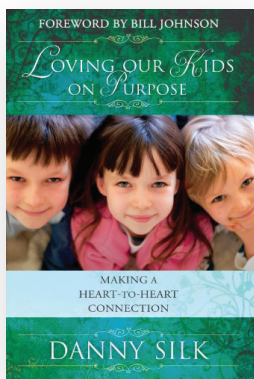
Resources



The Parent Cue (Blog and app)

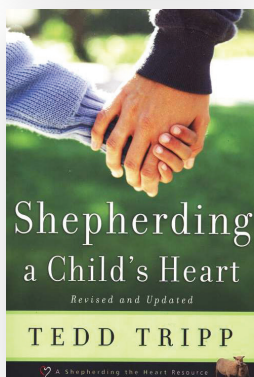
This is a place for you to go and get advice, wisdom, and ideas that are all connected to what your kids are learning in kid's ministry. This is a great way for all of us to be saying the same thing.

**Check out the parenting small groups at your campus.
Read books on parenting; here are some of my favorites:**



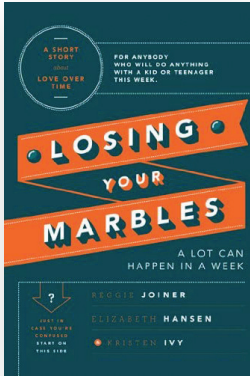
Loving Our Kids on Purpose

by Danny Silk



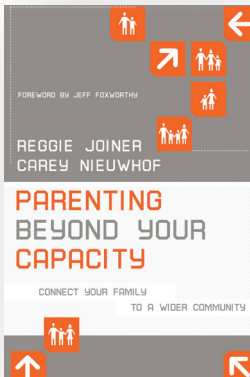
Shepherding a Child's Heart

by Ted Tripp



Losing Your Marbles

by Reggie Joiner



Parenting Beyond Your Capacity

by Reggie Joiner

**Parents, we
Believe in you.
You can do it!**

