



Hey parents! Thanks for bringing your child to Jump Start. We believe this is an important first step in your child's spiritual journey. We hope that the presentation of John 3:16 at Jump Start gave you some tools to begin this most important conversation with your child.

### **The Gospel**

Many times we complicate the gospel. God's message of salvation is simple and for everyone. God loves us, he gave us his son, Jesus, and we make the decision to receive his gift. Over the next few days, we encourage you to set aside some time to sit with your child and go through the Jump Start homework.

A defining point is understanding sin. Does your child understand what sin is? Sin is not just the bad things that we do. It is also those things that we should do, but don't. It is the things that we think and attitudes that we have. Sin is essentially doing what we want to do when we want to do it rather than doing what God would have us do.

Kids should understand that sin is more than just an issue of behavior. It's important that they understand that sin comes from the heart (Matthew 15:18-19). Although it's possible to correct a child's behavior without ever addressing the problem of sin, it's important that kids understand sin is less about specific actions and more about the attitude in our heart that gives rise to those actions. It's helpful to your child to find ways for them to understand what their actions reveal about their hearts. Here are some examples:

*A girl at school who won't sit with the new kid because her friends don't like him, reveals that the acceptance of those kids is more important to her than treating others the way we would want to be treated – a sin.*

*The child who watches T.V. when his parents say he should be doing his homework does not want to submit his parent's authority – a sin.*

*The little boy who hits his sister because she tries to borrow his building blocks has an issue with selfishness – a sin.*

There are four big ideas about sin that your child should understand.

1. **God loves them.** Love is the necessary ingredient to understand God's plan for us. He has always loved us, even before we were born. John 3:16 shows us, through God's own actions, how much he loves us. He did not just say he loves us but he showed us by giving us his son, Jesus, to be a sacrifice for us.
2. **All have sinned.** Romans 3:23 teaches us that everyone has sinned. This is a problem for all people. It may be helpful to share with your child that even parents struggle with sin. This will help them see this process as something you are doing together.
3. **Sin separates us from God.** Does your child understand that their sin separates them from God? God is perfect. He punishes sin. Sin has consequences and everyone must pay the price for their sin. We find in Romans 6:23 that the penalty of sin is death and living forever without God. Since we're all sinners, all of us find ourselves separated from God because of our sin. On our own there is nothing we can do to avoid that punishment.
4. **Jesus made a way for us!** The fourth big idea is that there is good news! God made a way for us to be forgiven of our sins. He sent his only son, Jesus. Does your child understand who Jesus is and what he did for us? God knew that we would sin, and he knew that someone would have to pay the price for that sin. He sent his son, Jesus, to earth to pay the price for our sin, because he loves us very much and does not want to be separated from us. Jesus died for us and even though he didn't deserve to die on the cross. He did it so that we could have a relationship with God forever.

Remember, it's not about being good enough. It's about putting your faith in Jesus as our Savior.

Many children will tell you they have always believed in Jesus, especially if they have grown up in a church. But, here's the big question. Do you feel your child recognizes that they are a sinner and are ready to receive Jesus as their Savior? It's important they can say they accepted Jesus and they can express that clearly.

### Things to Keep in Mind

Making a decision to trust Christ should be a lifelong journey of following and growing in our relationship with Jesus. Here are some practical ways for you, as a parent, to help your child grow in their relationship with Jesus.

1. Make it a regular habit to pray with your child. Remind them that they can tell God anything and they can trust him no matter what.
2. Spend time together reading from the Bible and learning how God wants us to live. There are some great resources online and apps for your phone. One of our favorites is called YouVersion. You can download it for free at [bible.com/app](http://bible.com/app).
3. Attend UpStreet regularly. It's important for your child to be connected in a small group with other kids, learning and growing in their faith.
4. Each month, read the Parent Cue email. This is a great way for you to see what your child is learning on UpStreet so that you can keep talking about it all month long at home. If you are not currently receiving the Parent Cue email, please give your classroom greeter your email address.

## **For the Parent**

The decision to receive Jesus as our Savior is the most important decision that your child will ever make. Remember children learn things gradually and by experience. Sometimes learning takes an extended period of time. If you have the feeling they are not quite ready to make this decision, then keep talking with them. It's okay to give them some more time. You are always welcome to bring them to Jump Start again.

It's easy to feel anxious if your child doesn't seem to say just the right things. Children mature at different speeds and times, and they will probably not explain their experience in adult terms. When talking with your child, ask open ended questions. Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. Allow your child to talk and express himself in his own way. This will help you get an understanding of their grasp on the gospel. It's normal for a child to question and wonder if their decision really worked. Often they believe they have to say a prayer over and over again just to feel sure. You have the opportunity to reassure them that salvation is not a prayer but about God's promise through Jesus.

Just as this is an important decision for our children, it is the single most important decision a parent can make too. If you have never made this decision for yourself, now is the perfect time. After all, you can't lead your child somewhere you have not been yourself. Consider joining a Starting Point group for a comfortable, conversational environment to jump start your own spiritual journey. If there is anything we can do to support you, please contact us. We would love to help.