

Pointing Children to Christ

PARENTS INTRODUCTION

The Students of this Study

This Bible study is written to help young people understand more about God's love and His plan for salvation. While it is difficult to make a study age-appropriate for all, this is directed to children 9 to 12 years old. For example, we did not include sexual immorality in the "list of sin", because it probably is not something a young child is tempted with (yet!). However, you may wish to modify some of the questions and discussion to teach teens. Encourage your child to ask you if they don't know what a word means.

Read the Bible Text

There are many Scripture references cited in this study. Please make an effort to read all the Bible references. They are not written out in this study. There are several benefits when a student opens their own Bible and reads the text from God's Word.



When is a child ready to become a Christian?

Becoming a Christian is the only solution to our sin and salvation for our soul. In order for one to respond to God's grace and the gospel, a person needs to understand that they have sinned against God and that the consequence is a broken relationship. The Biblical examples of those who were baptized were people who were first convicted and cut to the heart about their own sin.



Jesus emphasized that an individual makes their own decision to follow God. *"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."* (John 1:12-13)

Most children from Christian homes want to follow Jesus and go to heaven. But when are they ready for the commitment? Some follow the Jewish Bar Mitzvah (literally meaning "son of the commandment") as a guide. This is when a Jewish child became responsible and accountable (13 years old for boys, 12 for girls). In their mind, this is when he could make a decision for himself to follow

God and be viewed as a responsible citizen in society. Today we know that every child develops differently. Some may understand their need for a Savior and their commitment to Christ at 8 years old, while others may not be at that point until they are 13. Some decide to wait until they are older teenagers, because they aren't ready to make such a commitment.

If a child is unable or unwilling to understand the concepts in this study, they probably aren't ready to become a Christian.

How much does one need to know about the commitment to follow Jesus?

Becoming a Christian is the biggest decision and greatest commitment anyone can make. It is a solemn, life-long dedication to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength and to be faithful to Him in every way in every day. It is a greater pledge than the marriage vow. Paul describes this new life in Christ and describes the necessary commitment in Romans 6:3-11.

Pointing Children to Christ

Why isn't there more about the structure of church in this study?

God created the church, which is the body of Christ. Every Christian is a member of the church, and should be working in a local congregation. We are added to the church when we accept the message and are baptized (Acts 2:41, 47). While the church is a group of redeemed people who share the message of salvation, Christians do not save, only Jesus does. It would be very beneficial to continue a study on the Christian life and the role and function of the church with those who have been added to the family of God. This lesson is designed to bring one to faith in Christ, understand the consequence of sin, how to be redeemed and the new life in Christ.



The power of prayer

Remember to pray with your child before and after you study with them. Let them know that you are regularly praying for them as they think about their commitment to following Jesus. Encourage them to pray about the things that they study and the commitment of becoming a Christian. God will give them wisdom and strength to make good choices throughout their life.

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Pointing Children to Christ

Jesus Loves Children ... and adults too!

God loves people very much. He created us in the beginning so that He could have a personal and intimate relationship with us. Jesus came from heaven to live as one of us in human form. He was God who lived among us (John 1:1-5, 14). Please read about the choice that Jesus made when He came to live on planet earth in Philippians 2:5-11.

Jesus also had a special place for children in His life. He welcomed them, spoke to them, prayed for them, blessed them and hugged them (Matthew 19:13-15). There are some qualities in children, like humility, that Jesus said were necessary to become a Christian (Matthew 18:1-6).



- Q1. How much does God love children? How do you know?*
- Q2. What are some of the good qualities of children?*

Read the story of a father and son in Luke 15:11-24



- Q3. Why did this young man want to leave home?*
- Q4. How much did the father want the son to return?*
- Q5. What kinds of things did the son do when he was gone?*
- Q6. How did the father show his love and forgiveness when the boy came home?*
- Q7. Who is the father in this story? Who is the son?*

John tell us that God loved us so much that He allowed His son to die on the cross in our place (read: John 3:16-18). We need someone to rescue us from our sin. We can't save ourselves. God loved us and planned to save us long before we loved Him or knew Him (1 John 4:9-10).

- Q8. What did God do to express His love for us?*
- Q9. Why was it necessary for Jesus to die on the cross?*
- Q10. How difficult do you think it was for Jesus to sacrifice His life?*



In this study we will learn about God's love, what went wrong and how we can be saved.

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Created to Worship

God created people with an intense desire to worship. Since God does not force us to worship Him, some people worship other gods, or they worship things, or other people or even themselves. Young people can worship the things they own, friends, athletic ability, grades, toys, money or popularity. God does not want us worshipping anyone or anything but Him (Exodus 34:14).

- Q1. Why kinds of things do people worship today?*
- Q2. What have you been worshipping lately?*



Sadly, many people have already decided to worship the things God created instead of God the creator and which has resulted in a lot of trouble (Romans 1:21-25). So we have to be careful not to be attracted to following idols (Deuteronomy 11:16). When tempted by the devil to worship him, Jesus said, “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.” (Matthew 4:7-10)

Paul told people who worshipped idols about the one true God in Acts 17:22-28. God does not need us to survive, but He has allowed us to live in this world so that we would seek for Him, reach out to Him and find Him. He really wants us to be close to Him.

- Q3. What kind of relationship does God want with you?*
- Q4. What has God done to make this possible?*



When questioned about where we are to worship, Jesus emphasized that God is most interested in us worshipping Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:20-24). That means we worship God the way that He has asked (in truth) and with the right attitude and heart (in spirit).

- Q5. How do we worship God in spirit?*
- Q6. What does it mean to worship God in truth?*

Our entire lives are to bring honor and praise to God. Paul tells us that we are to offer our bodies as living and holy sacrifices to God (worship) and allow Him to transform us to be pleasing to Him (Romans 12:1-2).

- Q7. How do we worship God at church?*
- Q8. Is this the only time we need to honor God or think about Him?*
- Q9. How do we worship God every day?*
- Q10. Why does Romans 12 talk about a sacrifice?*



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When God Speaks

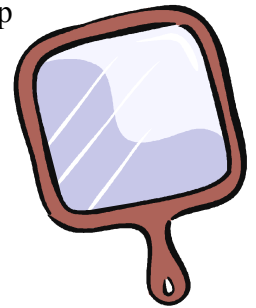
God has communicated with us. In the Old Testament, He spoke to people like Abraham, Moses, the judges, priests and prophets. When Jesus lived on this earth, He told us everything we needed to know about God (Hebrews 1:1-3). The miracles, lessons, discussions and teachings of Jesus are written down in a book called the Bible. Men of God were led by the Holy Spirit to write exactly what God wanted us to know (2 Peter 1:19-21). Paul said the Bible gives us wisdom for salvation, is written by God, and will equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:14-17).



- Q1. How does God communicate to us today?*
- Q2. What will the Bible teach us?*
- Q3. How can the Bible help us become more like God?*

We must read and learn what the Bible says and we must put it into practice in our lives (Matthew 7:24-27). The Bible is like a mirror which we look into to see how we measure up to God's standard (James 1:22-25). Those things that are unattractive or out of place, we need to correct immediately so that we can be pleasing in God's eyes.

- Q4. When you look into the bathroom mirror, what do you look for?*
- Q5. How is looking into God's Word similar to looking into a mirror?*
- Q6. What good is it to read the Bible but not change our lives?*



The Bible will be the final authority and standard used when we stand before God at the judgment. After we die we will be accepted or rejected by God based on the words of Jesus (John 12:47-50). So it is very important that we know God's will and practice it in our lives.

The people who lived in Berea are a good example to us: they were very eager to learn God's Word and they examined the Bible to see if the message was true (Acts 17:11-12). Studying the Bible and praying every day is a great thing to do in order for us to grow up in Christ (1 Peter 2:2-3).



- Q7. How can you, like the Bereans, show your eagerness (enthusiasm) to know God?*
- Q8. What standard or authority will be used at the judgment to decide who will go to heaven and who will not?*

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Sin Separates

God has created us so that we could have an intimate, loving relationship with Him. He has made within us a need to worship and He wants to be the One we honor and praise. Sadly, we have chosen to follow other things, people and even ourselves. When we disobey and dishonor God it is called sin. Here is a brief list of sins that young people might do:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Lying – Revelation 21:8 | ✓ Jealousy – Romans 13:13 |
| ✓ Deceit – Romans 1:29 | ✓ Selfishness – Philippians 2:3 |
| ✓ Stealing – 1 Corinthians 6:10 | ✓ Anger out of control – Galatians 5:20 |
| ✓ Disobedient to parents – 2 Timothy 3:2 | ✓ Rude talk – Ephesians 4:29; 5:4 |
| ✓ Pride – 2 Timothy 3:2 | ✓ Unforgiving – 2 Timothy 3:3 |
| ✓ Greed – Ephesians 4:19 | ✓ Gossip – 2 Corinthians 12:20 |

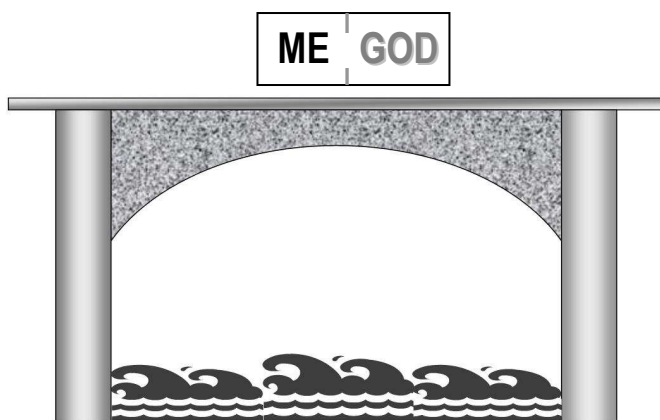
At some point a child begins to understand the difference between right and wrong. Their conscience makes them feel guilty for making wrong choices. They sense that their sin is not only against another person, but also against God. The Bible states that everyone has sinned and falls short of God's glory (Romans 3:23) and if someone says they have never sinned they are lying (1 John 1:8-10).

- Q1. What is sin?*
Q2. Have you ever sinned?
Q3. What sins have you done?

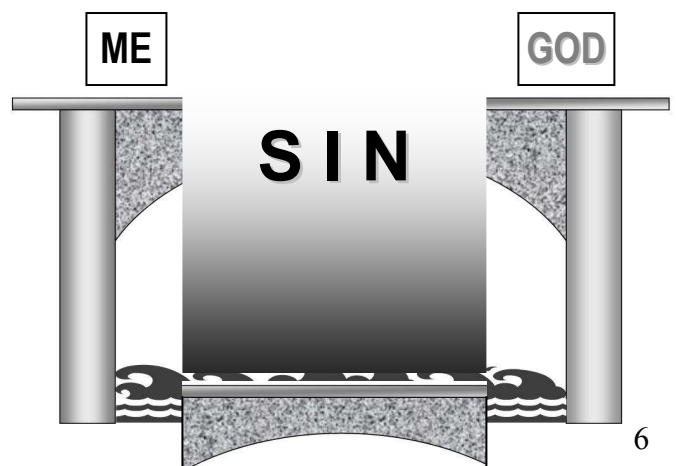
Since God is completely pure and holy, He cannot have a relationship with sin or sinners, nor tolerate wrong. (Habakkuk 1:13). Our sin has created a great separation between us and God and He cannot look upon us (Isaiah 59:1-2). The result of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:22-23; Ephesians 2:1-3), which ultimately means that we won't go to heaven to live with God forever (Galatians 5:16-21).

- Q4. Why can't God look on sin or live in the presence of sinners?*
Q5. What does it mean that we are dead in our sins?
Q6. What is the consequence (end result) of sin?

We are close & blessed by God



Sin Separates us from God



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Jesus Reunites

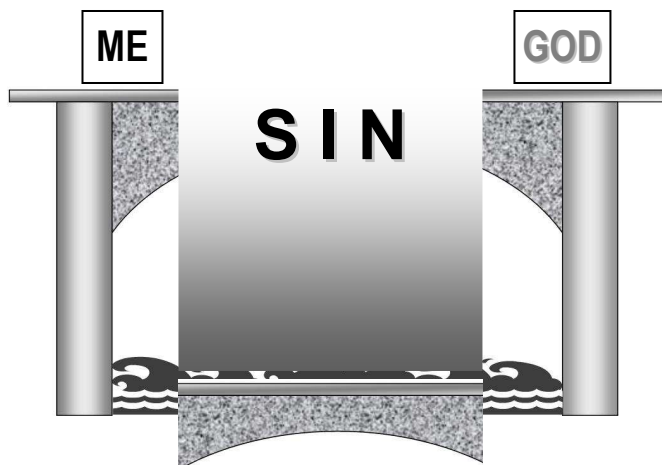
God loves us so much that He wants to forgive us and save us from our sin. It is by God's grace and mercy that we can be reunited with Him and have the opportunity to live with Him forever in heaven (Ephesians 2:1-10). God's desire is that everyone would be saved and He has sent Jesus as the ransom (1 Timothy 2:3-6). Perhaps you have seen a movie where someone is kidnapped. The bandits leave a note demanding a ransom of one million dollars or they will never see the person again. In a similar way, we were held prisoner by the power of sin, separated from God. However, God has bought us back with the blood of Jesus (the price necessary) as the ransom and Jesus Himself is our redeemer.

- Q1. What is grace?*
- Q2. How did Jesus pay the ransom?*
- Q3. What if Jesus did not die on the cross for us?*

Since the penalty for sin is death, all we can do is accept the penalty (Romans 6:23). But Jesus came to pay the death penalty for us while we were still in our sin (Romans 5:6-8). Take a few minutes to read about the trial and death of Jesus, realizing that He died in your place to free us from the power and penalty of sin (Luke 23:1-24:8).

- Q4. Barabbus was a murderer in prison waiting to be crucified. He was set free and Jesus was crucified in His place. How are we like Barabbas?*
- Q5. How did people treat Jesus in these final hours of His life?*
- Q6. Was Jesus forgiving or did He want to get even with those who killed Him?*
- Q7. Why is it important that Jesus was raised from the dead?*

Sin Separates us from God



Jesus reunites and restores us back to God by the cross



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Becoming A Christian

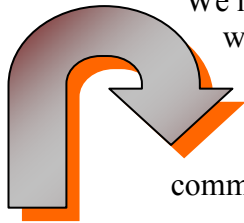
In order to be saved it is essential to be a follower of Jesus. A true Christian is one who accepts God's grace and commits their life to worshipping Him in everything and in every day.

FAITH

Faith is believing in God and that He will do exactly what He has promised (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is developed and matured by studying and applying God's Word (Romans 10:17). There may be times when we will obey God, even when we don't understand all the reasons why.



TURN AND RETURN



We no longer want to live for and worship others, things or ourselves. Instead we want to worship, honor and obey God. This is called repentance, which means to turn 180°. It is more than just feeling sorry, it is a change of heart (2 Corinthians 7:10-11) which leads to a change of action (Acts 26:20). God will bless us when we turn from our sinful ways (Acts 3:25-26). In the past God overlooked ignorance, but now he commands everyone to leave sinful living and turn back to Him for life (Acts 17:30-31).

TELLING OTHERS

We should never be afraid or ashamed to talk about Jesus. Instead we must tell others what Jesus has done in our lives and our commitment to Him. We should confess that Jesus is Lord of our lives and let others know that we love and worship God (Romans 10:9-10). But talking alone is not enough. We must believe in our heart that Jesus was raised from the dead and we too have a new life in Jesus. If we want Jesus to say that He knows us at the judgment, we must tell others that we know Him now (Luke 12:8-9).



BORN AGAIN

Jesus said that we must be born again in order to see the Kingdom of Heaven. When asked for more clarity, Jesus said that we must be born of water and the spirit in order for us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:3-5). What does this mean? When the church began 2000 years ago, Peter told those who wanted to be right with God that they needed to repent and be baptized (literally buried in water) so that their sins would be forgiven and they would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:36-41).



Being immersed in water is a reenactment of what Jesus did for us. Just as Jesus died on the cross, so we die to our life of sin. As Jesus was buried in the tomb, so we are buried in the water. Then just as Jesus was resurrected, we are raised out of the water to live a new life for God (Romans 6:3-11).

When we are baptized we take off the old life and put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).

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A New Life

Becoming a Christian is the beginning of a whole new life. We no longer live for ourselves, but for God. When we are purified at baptism the Holy Spirit comes to live in us (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit will work in our lives to make us become the people God want us to be. Our attitudes will change to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-25).

Q1. How will your live be different when you are born again?

Q2. How will the Holy Spirit help you live for God?

Q3. What kind of person will you be with the Spirit working in you? (Galatians 5:22-25)

We must delete the old thoughts, desires, habits and attitudes. Now that we are new, we will allow God to reprogram our lives so that we can have the qualities of God. Colossians 3:1-14 speaks about a changed mind, a renewed heart and a different life. Paul said that he was crucified with Christ and the old Paul doesn't live anymore but Jesus lives in his life.

Q.4 What does it mean to set your heart and mind on things above? (Colossians 3:1-2)

Q5. How can we to treat other people?

Q6. What will be the most difficult change to make?

Since we have been born again, we love the Lord with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our strength and all of our mind (Luke 10:27). God now comes first in everything. Since we are totally commitment to the Lord we must be careful what we see, hear and do. We must guard the things we think about, desire and love. Paul wrote, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or worthy of praise - think about such things." (Philippians 4:8) Our mind (thinking) and our heart (feelings) belong to the Lord. The way we are to love is listed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

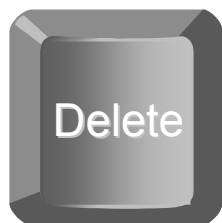
Q.7 How much of our heart and mind will you give to God

Q8. How will following Jesus change your relationship with

a) your parents

b) your brothers and sisters

c) your friends and classmates



Delete Sin
Hebrews 12:1-3



Escape Evil
2 Peter 1:4



Alter Life
Romans 6:4



Enter Heaven
2 Peter 3:13

Pointing Children to Christ

A Big Decision

If becoming a Christian sounds like a big decision, it is. It is the most important decision that you will make in your life. Your eternal home depends on your relationship with Jesus. Before making such a big decision, Jesus tells us to count the cost (Luke 14:28-32). A Christian is a person who follows Jesus and does what He says (John 8:31-32). Living for Christ won't always be easy. It won't always be popular. Sometimes you might be teased, laughed at or left out. Some people may talk about you behind your back. One day you might have to stand up for what is right and lose a grade, a job or a friend.



Q1. Why must we consider the cost before we begin?

Q2. What difficulties might you face because you are living for Jesus?

We must be willing to give up self and make some big sacrifices for the Lord (Luke 9:23-26). Denying our own wants, desires and wishes in order to follow God's plan will be a challenge. Denying self leads to dying to self so that we can live for God. Never be ashamed of Jesus or afraid to admit that you follow Him. In the end we will be blessed by God and receive a home in heaven.

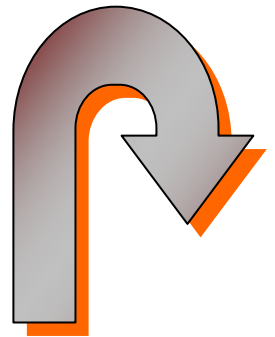
Although we have turned from sin and promised to follow Jesus, we will not be perfect. When we sin after being born again, Jesus continues to forgive us. John tells us to continue to walk in the light with Jesus. There will be times we sin by stumbling, making wrong decisions or wandering off the path, but if we get back on the right road where Jesus is, we will be right with God (1 John 1:5-10).

Q3. Why did Jesus tell His followers to take up their cross and follow Him?

Q4. Although it will be difficult to live for God, is it really worth it?

Q5. What does it mean to walk in the light?

Q5. What should a Christian do when he or she sins?



While making a decision to become a Christian is the biggest and most important decision that anyone can make, it is also the most rewarding. Your desire to love God and follow Jesus will change your life now and forever. You can also help others through your life, words and example to know about Jesus so that they too will be followers of Jesus.

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Read the Fine Print (defining the terms)

LOVE is much more than a warm, fuzzy feeling. True love (agape love) is a total commitment to care for, serve, respect and want the very best for someone else. Sometimes there is no warm, fuzzy feeling involved. Love is not dependant on what others do or don't do for us, but it is based on our commitment and desire to do what is good and right. God loves us unconditionally, even when we hate Him (Romans 5:6-10). Read 1 Corinthians 13 to learn how love is demonstrated in our thoughts, attitudes and actions.

REPENTANCE is having a change of heart and mind. It comes from realizing that we have done wrong (sin) and now desire to do what is right. It involves turning around (making a 180) and going the other way. When we walk away from God to live for ourselves, we must turn our faces toward Him and walk toward Him in love by following His Word. (Acts 26:20; Acts 3:19; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11)

A SAVIOR is one who puts their life in harms way to save someone who cannot help themselves. A drowning child may have no hope of saving themselves, but a lifeguard may rescue them from certain death. In a similar way, Jesus is our "lifeguard" who pulled us out of the sea of death by giving His own life. (Romans 5:6-10; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 4:12)

A MEDIATOR is someone who brings two people who have been separated back together. Our sin has separated us from God. Jesus is our mediator and He is the only One who can restore our relationship with God (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15; John 14:6).

RANSOM is the price paid to get someone back. In movies, when someone is taken, a ransom note or a telephone call is made with a price that must be paid to get the person back. The money that is delivered is called a ransom. The ransom price to get us back to God was the death (or blood) of a perfect sacrifice. Jesus is the only one who could be our ransom. He died that we would be set free and be reunited with God. (Jeremiah 31:11; Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:15)

JUDGEMENT is a time when everyone will stand before Jesus, who will judge each person (Hebrews 9:27-28). He will judge people based on His Word (John 12:47-48), if we are in Christ (Romans 8:1-3), if we obey Him (Matthew 7:21-27) and according to how we have lived (Matthew 25:31-46).

BAPTISM is a reenactment of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. We die to our sins (repentance) just as Jesus died to himself on the cross, we are buried in water just as Jesus was buried in a tomb, and we are raised to live a new life just as Jesus rose from the grave after three days (Romans 6:3-14). Baptism is to be buried (or submerged) in water so that all of our sins will be forgiven and we receive the Holy Spirit to live in us (Acts 2:38).

A REDEEMER is person who purchases something or someone else. When a child wins tickets at Celebration Station, they turn them in or "redeem" the tickets to get a prize. Jesus purchased us from the control of the devil by sacrificing His life. Now we are His and we are free to live with Him.

LORD is the name given to a king, ruler or master (1 Timothy 6:15). Jesus is the King sitting on the throne of our lives. He is the Ruler whom we follow and obey. He is our Master whom we serve. Since no one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), we must choose who or what we will follow.

GRACE is giving something special to someone even though they don't deserve it. God has forgiven us and given us a place in heaven. An acronym for GRACE is "God's Riches At Christ's Expense". Grace is often connected with love, compassion, patience, mercy and forgiveness.

MERCY is when we don't punish others for the bad things they have done. God does not discipline us according to our sins, but He forgives and treats us with kindness and grace. Mercy is often connected with love, compassion, patience, grace and forgiveness.

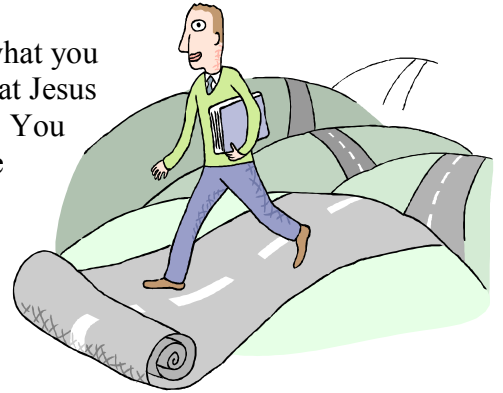
JUSTIFIED is when our sin is forgiven and forgotten. God is very loving but He is also just. He could not just ignore or excuse our sin, the penalty had to be paid. Jesus died so that we could be forgiven. It is just-if-i'd never sinned because it is completely removed from us (Titus 3:7).

Pointing Children to Christ

Journal for the Journey

Making a decision to become a disciple of Jesus is extremely important. Over the years your knowledge, understanding and commitment will grow and multiply. Eventually you may forget the purpose of your baptism and the reason you made the commitment to be born again.

Please take a few minutes after you have been baptized to write down what you have learned, why you decided to become a Christian and the change that Jesus has made in your life. Put this away in a safe place for future reference. You can even photocopy it and give a copy to your parents to put in their file for safe keeping.



I HAVE LEARNED ...

JESUS CHANGED MY LIFE ...

I WAS BAPTIZED BECAUSE ...

TO ME BEING "BORN AGAIN" MEANS ...