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Evangelizing Children: The Dangers and Keys to Success

by [Keith Tusing](#)

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As a parent, pastor, or children's leader, evangelism should be one of our **top priorities**. However, there are potential dangers we should take into account. On one side, there's the danger of leading children to think they are saved when they are not. On the other side, there's the risk of discouraging children who express a genuine desire to follow Christ. With that said, we must approach the idea of child evangelism with our "eyes wide open" and our **focus on Christ!**

So let's take a look at what I believe are some of the possible **"dangers" of child evangelism:**

The Danger of Oversimplifying the Gospel of Christ

Because of a child's limited comprehension, the temptation for many leaders is to oversimplify the message of the Gospel when they attempt to evangelize children. Sometimes, this comes from programmed approaches to child evangelism, which may abbreviate the Gospel, downplay the demands of the Gospel, or leave out important points of the Gospel completely.

The Danger of Coercing a Profession of Faith

Regardless of whether the Gospel is presented in an oversimplified or thorough manner, many request some type of immediate response to that message. It could be a show of hands in a group setting, a rote repetition of "the sinner's prayer," or almost anything that may be counted as a positive response. Children will almost always respond in whatever way adults ask—not at all guaranteeing real acts of faith in Christ.

The Danger of Assuming the Reality of Regeneration

This next danger is assuming that a child's positive response to the Gospel is full-fledged saving faith. Children often respond positively to the Gospel for many reasons that are unrelated to any awareness of sin or real understanding of spiritual truths. Many children, for example, profess faith because of peer pressure at church or a desire to please their parents.

But it is not enough for us simply to **avoid the common dangers**. We must also proactively practice certain **Key Elements**:

Set an Example of Godliness

Evangelizing children should not only be teaching the Gospel in a classroom environment, but we must also be a living example of it in our life. As we teach the truths of God's Word, children have the opportunity to observe our lives up close and to see if we seriously believe what we are teaching. When parents, pastors, and leaders are faithful not only to teach, but also to live out the Gospel, the impact is

significant.

Teach the Complete Gospel of Christ

The heart of evangelism is the Gospel, "for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." (Rom. 1:16) If a child is to repent and believe in Christ, then it will be through the teaching of the message of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18–25; 2 Tim. 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23–25). Children will not be saved without the Gospel. We must teach children the law of God, teach them the Gospel of divine grace, and show them their need for a Savior. We are to constantly and consistently point them to Jesus Christ as the only One who can save them. We must also resist the temptation to downplay or soften the demands of the Gospel and must proclaim the message in its fullness.

Understand the Biblical Signs of Salvation

The evidence that someone has genuinely repented of his sin and believed in Christ is the same in a child as it is in an adult—**Spiritual Transformation**. According to Scripture, true believers follow Christ (John 10:27), confess their sins (1 John 1:9), love their brothers (1 John 3:14), obey God's commandments (1 John 2:3; John 15:14), do the will of God (Matt. 12:50), abide in God's Word (John 8:31), keep God's Word (John 17:6), and do good works (Eph. 2:10). We should look for this type of fruit to increase in children's lives as we continue to teach them the truths of the Gospel. We should also recognize that an essential part of our work is to guard children from thinking they are saved when they are not. Understanding the Biblical Signs of salvation—and explaining them to children—is important part of **Evangelism**.

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