

"I know it's hard to tell sometimes, but what do you think is the wise choice in this situation?"

"I don't know. Why do you think that happened?"

"Did you know there are 66 books in the Bible, and they all connect to tell one story?"

"I'm sorry that happened (or I'm happy that happened). Do you want to talk to God about it?"

"We might not be able to see God, but we can know He's there by looking all around us! What are some other things we can't see but we know are there?" (Examples might be the wind, the sun at nighttime, gravity, etc.).

"No question is too big or too small for God to handle. Do you have big questions about God?"

"That reminds me of a time when I went through something similar, and here's what I learned . . ." (Tell your own faith stories.)

"If you were in the same situation, how would you want to be treated?"

"Can I tell you about the first time I trusted Jesus?"

"You are so good at (singing, making things, making people feel welcome, etc.). How do you think you could serve someone else using your gifts?"

A Volunteer's Guide to . . .

Talking About Faith



with Elementary Kids



How to Talk About Faith

Faith conversations in the elementary phase are all about discovery.

→ Elementary school is a season of discovering how the world works—and how to have fun in it! Kids want to laugh and play and learn. Like little scientists, they begin to combine the wonder they felt as a preschooler, with discovery to search for answers as they ask, “Who am I?”

In this stage, storytelling is a powerful tool for learning more about God and the Bible since abstract thinking can still be a challenge. Story—more than concepts—make for the most effective teaching.¹ Kids relate to a God who heals the sick, conquers evil, overcomes death, and teaches them how to win at life.

Kids learn information quickly and easily. But they’re still mostly concrete thinkers. They need repetition and clear application. It’s essential to connect new concepts to their everyday experiences.

In this Phase . . . As a volunteer, when you **engage their interests**, you help a kid trust God’s character and experience God’s family.

Elementary-age kids are primarily motivated by fun. So, incorporating activities and stories is essential to helping them learn. At the same time, elementary schoolers think like scientists and understand the world through concrete evidence. That’s why it’s important to use real-life examples and avoid abstract concepts in your conversations about faith.

In Your Conversations . . .

BEFORE

Remember the phase. Faith conversations are life-long conversations, so not every idea or truth has to be talked about in one conversation.

Say what matters most. Consider one big idea about God you want kids to walk away from the conversation remembering, and let that guide your conversation.

DURING

Praise the effort, not just the outcome. Whether kids get an answer right or wrong, give them positive affirmation that they did a good job thinking. This can help them develop a growth mindset.

Get real with illustrations. Avoid abstract ideas and instead, give concrete examples and opportunities for lots of repetition.

Have fun! Add activities, play, and stories because during this phase, kids are motivated by fun.

Expect tangents and questions.

Even if you plan to have a conversation about one thing, remain open to where kids lead the conversation. They may need a different conversation based on what they’re going through or feeling that day.

Be okay with questions. The church should be the safest place for a kid to ask questions. Even if you don’t have an answer, praise the question and be willing to explore it together.

AFTER

Keep your promises. If you said you would explore a question or if they tell you about something big happening in their life, follow up. This builds trust.

Celebrate your wins. It’s too easy to focus on the negative, so reflect on conversations that went well. Focus on small wins. Remember that you’re making a difference just by showing up consistently.

Cue the parent. The faith conversations that really stick happen all week long—so make it a point to remember a specific way each kid interacted with the lesson to relay to parents at pick up. This will help them repeat that conversation during the week.

¹ Keeley, Robert. 2010. “Faith Development and Faith Formation: More than Just Ages and Stages.” www.faithformationlearningexchange.net.