

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

Creating Spiritual Conversations

Toolbox III

Suggested Session Length: 60 minutes

PowerPoint Available: "Toolbox III: Sharing the Gospel with Children: Creating Spiritual Conversations"

Audience: Experienced DL volunteers who work primarily with elementary-aged students

Summary: Learn to create opportunities for spiritual conversations with children that will lead them to Christ and help them grow.

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: Reviewing the Tools

Discovery Land provides multiple tools for leaders as they present the Gospel. We covered these in detail in "Toolbox II: Sharing the Gospel with Children - Advanced." Here is a quick summary of each tool.

***Training idea:** As you review each resource, pass around the printed resource. Ask leaders to share any tips or stories from when they've used these tools.*

Slide 3: Wordless Book

Summary from Toolbox II: The Wordless Book is the primary way we share the Gospel with children in Discovery Land. Each color has a simple meaning and a key verse that will help children understand the true meaning of God's love and how they can have a personal relationship with Him now and for eternity.

Slide 4: "Believe it or Not?" booklet

Summary from Toolbox II: The "Believe it or Not?" booklet explains the Gospel using Scripture, kid-friendly definitions, and the Wordless Book framework. It is a great tool to explain the Gospel to an interested child, and/or to send home with a child who is thinking about what it means to trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Slide 5: "Now What?" booklet

Summary from Toolbox II: If a child chooses to trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior, the "Now What?" booklet is a great introduction to what it means to follow Jesus and live the Christian life. It briefly covers topics such as who they are in Christ, what it means to be a part of the family of God, and spiritual disciplines such as worship and prayer.

Slide 6: “I Believe” bookmark

Summary from Toolbox II: Following a child’s decision to trust Christ as their Savior, the “I Believe” bookmark can be filled out as a reminder of this important decision. The bookmark remains with the student and the tab at the end is filled out and turned in to DL leadership so they can rejoice with the student, pray for the student, and keep track of who has made a decision to receive Christ.

Slide 7: “Coaching Kids for Salvation” card

Summary from Toolbox II: To help leaders talk children through the decision to trust Christ as their Savior, the DL program provides the “Coaching Kids for Salvation” card.

Slide 8: Defining our Audience

Once we understand the purpose of these tools and how we can use them, we can begin to consider how these tools can best be used with our specific audience.

Our students are part of Generation Z (born in the late 1990’s through around 2012) and Generation Alpha (born after 2010).

Training idea: Before proceeding to the next slide, have leaders brainstorm a list of characteristics or shared experiences they see in Generations Z and Alpha.

Slide 9: Characteristics of Generations Z and Alpha

Our students...

1. Experience a world that is constantly changing → they need stability.
2. Live in a world where absolute truth is denied → they need trust.
3. Are likely to live in an unstable home → they need safety.
4. Are often lonely and seek to be accepted → they need belonging.
5. Often lack meaningful relationships and loyalty → they need faithfulness.

... and they desperately need Jesus. Only He can offer true stability, safety, and belonging. Only He is always trustworthy and faithful.

This is the audience we need to keep in mind as we prepare to share the Gospel. Knowing what they long for and need, we can be intentional in our approach to spiritual conversations.

Slide 10: Creating an Environment for Spiritual Conversations: Pray!

We start by praying that God will give us opportunities for spiritual conversations with kids. We ask God to use us, to soften kids' hearts, and to help us recognize these opportunities.

Romans 10:14-15 says, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Let's pray that God will give us opportunities to do just what this verse says: to be sent to preach to kids so that they might believe!

***Training idea:** Give leaders small pieces of paper and instruct them to write Romans 10:14-15. Ask them to put this paper in a visible place in their homes or churches, so they will be reminded to pray for the opportunity to share the Gospel.*

Slide 11: Creating an Environment for Spiritual Conversations: Watch!

As you prepare and lead in Discovery Land, be alert and mindful of when these opportunities might arise.

Many opportunities to lead a child to Christ are woven into the structure of the curriculum:

- 1) When a Lead Teacher presents the Gospel using the Wordless Book in the lesson.
- 2) When a student asks a question.
- 3) When a Discover Time activity uses Wordless Book colors.
- 4) When a Worship Leader talks about Jesus being Lord and Savior.
- 5) And so much more!

When we pray and ask God to give us opportunities to lead children to Christ, we must be ready because He will give us these opportunities!

Slide 12: Creating an Environment for Spiritual Conversations: Ask!

One of the best ways to open the door to a spiritual conversation is to ask questions. This may simply be offering the *invitation* component of the Gospel message: "Would you like to ask Jesus to save you?"

***Training idea:** Have leaders partner up and practice specifically sharing the invitation piece of the Gospel. They should get comfortable asking this question and navigating the conversation that follows.*

In addition to directly asking if a child would like to be saved, we as leaders can use thoughtful questions that could lead into a spiritual conversation.

***Training idea:** Work together to create a list of questions you could ask that would prompt students to have spiritual conversations. Some examples can be found on the "Coaching Kids for Salvation" resource. You can also go back to Slide 9 and come up with questions that specifically address the needs listed.*

Slide 13: Practice!

Using what we've discussed, we are going to practice having conversations with children in specific scenarios. You will pair up with a partner - one will be the "leader" and the other will be the "child". We will have three scenarios. Everyone will read a short summary with me, then we will have the "leaders" leave the room so that I can show the "children" the prompt on the screen. Then, you and your partner will practice having a spiritual conversation. You may use your Bibles and any of the provided Gospel resources during these conversations. Your goal as the "leader" is to get to know the "child" and guide them into a conversation about the Gospel.

Have leaders divide into pairs and decide who will be the "leader" and who will be the "child" for this first scenario. All participants will read a short summary of the scenario. Then whoever is the "leader" will leave the room. While the "leader" is out of the room, the "child" will get more details about their situation. Once the "child" has reviewed the scenario, invite the "leaders" back into the room and begin the first practice round. Repeat with each new scenario.

Optional: *You may do the first scenario together as a large group to demonstrate how this activity should be done.*

Slide 14: Scenario #1: Matthew

This text is for all participants to read.

You can tell that Matthew loves to come to Discovery Land. He works really hard to earn Tracker Tickets and has memorized many verses. Even though Matthew can't come every week, he works very hard to stay on track with the rest of the students.

Slide 15: Meet the Student - Matthew's Parents are Divorcing

The "leaders" should not see this text, only the "children."

Matthew loves coming to Discovery Land. He loves doing Discover Time activities and works really hard to earn lots of Tracker Tickets. Discovery Land is his "happy place". He feels like he belongs here, and he has friends here.

When Matthew leaves Discovery Land, his world turns upside down. His parents just finalized their divorce this week, and they are packing boxes now because his home is being officially split. He will continue to go to church with his mom, but when he stays with his dad, he won't be able to come to Discovery Land.

When participants are ready, put Slide 14 back on the screen and invite the "leaders" back into the room. The leaders do not get to know the scenario - they should start to talk with the student and figure out how to encourage the student and share the Gospel.

Give leaders approximately 5 minutes for this exercise. At the end, pull up Slide 15 and talk with the “leaders” about their “child.”

Discuss as a group: If you knew this information, how would you approach this conversation? Would you say or ask anything differently? What do you think this child needed to hear today?

Slide 16: Scenario #2: Sarah

This text is for all participants to read.

Sarah comes to Discovery Land every week with her friend. You can tell she is always a little nervous about coming; she's probably shy. She doesn't participate much in class, but you can tell she's always listening.

Slide 17: Meet the Student - Sarah's Parents are not Christians

The “leaders” should not see this text, only the “children.”

Sarah wants to come to Discovery Land, but it makes her anxious. She comes to Discovery Land with a friend, not with her own family. Her parents do not believe in Jesus. In fact, they mock her for wanting to go to church. Sarah loves Jesus, but she does not feel supported at home.

When participants are ready, put Slide 16 back up on the screen and invite the “leaders” back into the room. The leaders do not get to know the scenario - they should start to talk with the student and figure out how to encourage the student and share the Gospel.

Give leaders approximately 5 minutes for this exercise. At the end, pull up Slide 17 and talk with the “leaders” about their “child.”

Discuss as a group: If you knew this information, how would you approach this conversation? Would you say or ask anything differently? What do you think this child needed to hear today?

Slide 18: Scenario #3: John

This text is for all participants to read.

John is one of your challenging students. It never seems like he's listening, and he's often rude in class. He talks while the leaders are talking and is disruptive. He comes every week, but it seems like he doesn't want to be there.

Slide 19: Meet the Student - John is Lonely

The “leaders” should not see this text, only the “children.”

John dreads coming to Discovery Land. He doesn't have any real friends at church or school. He feels very lonely, and he wishes there was a place where he could have a real friend. He comes to Discovery Land because his parents make him. He goofs off because he wishes someone would notice him and be his friend.

When participants are ready, put Slide 18 back up on the screen and invite the “leaders” back into the room. The leaders do not get to know the scenario - they should start to talk with the student and figure out how to encourage the student and share the Gospel.

Give leaders approximately 5 minutes for this exercise. At the end, pull up Slide 19 and talk with the “leaders” about their “child.”

Discuss as a group: If you knew this information, how would you approach this conversation? Would you say or ask anything differently? What do you think this child needed to hear today?

Slide 20: Conclusion

God is able to use us to share the Good News with our students. We don't always know their circumstances at home and school, but we do know that God loves them and wants them to know Him. Let's pray for these children, for their families, and for ourselves.

Spend time in prayer as a group.