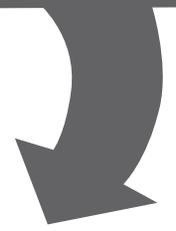


# When Is a Child Ready?



“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Ephesians 1:11).

- What does this verse say about a person’s readiness to make a faith decision?
- Based on this verse, how can you know a child’s ready?



## ▼ Training Session

You’ve probably noticed that kids grow, physically and spiritually, at different rates. The timing varies.

Some children are ready to make a faith decision quite early. For others it takes a major life change or experience. And still others don’t want to make a decision at all—or they wait till the teenage or adult years!

Of course, deciding *not* to make a faith decision is making a decision.

Look back at Ephesians 1:11. Essentially it’s up to God. Case closed.

But take heart! You have a powerful hand in it, too. God’s using you to help children make that decision. Though you have little to do with *when* children choose to follow Jesus, God puts you in their lives for when children *do* make that choice.

So relax. God will make it clear to you.

For now, be prepared. The important thing is that you’re ready when the child’s ready.

**Sometimes kids make it obvious when they’re ready:** “I’m not a Christian, and I want to be” or “I want to be Jesus’ friend.”

**Sometimes they hint:** “How do you know if you’re going to heaven or not?” or “I don’t think I’m good enough to be a Christian.”

When you hear these statements, stop and make sure kids understand. Ask, “Do you realize that God wants you as a friend—and that will forever change your life?” If you know they’re ready, talk more about it in private.

**Many times, though, kids don’t make it as obvious:** A child interrupts your lesson on Noah’s ark, “Why did God close the door on all those drowning people?”

Gulp! You realize your answer could help the child decide to follow that same God who shut the door—or it could turn him away.

When children bring up questions or statements like those, pause and ask God for guidance. Respond gently with probing questions. You may find that the child was just curious about the ark. Kids are always searching. They just need more help in getting there. Be patient.

The moment that a child’s ready depends on the child—and on God’s work. How we respond when a child *is* ready is critical. Talk with the child in private about the decision and what it means. Then encourage the child to talk to Jesus about it, asking Jesus to forgive him or her and be a forever friend. And make sure you let the parents in on the spiritual growth!

What an honor to impact a child in this way!



## Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- Why is a private talk with a child more beneficial to determine the right time for a faith decision?
- What are some other not-so-obvious statements you've heard that indicate a child's readiness to commit to Jesus?
- When a conversation in public makes for the right time to explain the plan of salvation, will you know what to say?

### ▼ Journal

*God, I want to help kids know you. Show me...*

**Following Jesus is an individual decision, but it's also a great group activity! Families who are following Christ together warmly share in the struggles and triumphs that accompany this fulfilling relationship. You are also important to share just how a Christian ought to live! Smile, they're watching you!**

### ▼ Application

Look over the next few weeks' lessons. There's probably one ideal story, or section, that leads into a frank talk about a child's faith commitment. In the weeks leading up to this lesson, pray specifically about what you'll say—and for those specific children you feel are not aware of Christ's desire to be their forever friend!