



## What terminology should we use when inviting children to respond to Jesus' call on their lives?

Should we ask children to become Christians, be born again, be saved, commit themselves to God, ask Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour, take a step of faith, turn from darkness to light, ask Jesus into their hearts, become Jesus' disciple or His follower?

Figuring out the right vocabulary is challenging. The Bible uses a range of metaphoric and descriptive language to describe salvation. This is problematic because children think literally, not abstractly.

So what words should we use so that Jesus' call on a child's life doesn't sound like a foreign language?

While there's no set of words that can be used in all circumstances, some words are more helpful than others.

Vocabulary from the world of sport works well. Most children have been part of a team. Their experience provides a point of reference. They understand an invitation to join Jesus' Team and can identify with Jesus as the Team Coach. They also know that when they join a team they have to listen to the coach and do what he/she says.

Relational vocabulary is also useful. Friendship is a concrete experience in a child's life. A child will understand an invitation to become Jesus' friend and a member of His family. A child will also know that close relationships are marked by intimacy, loyalty, love and trust.

Finally, when you invite a child to respond to Jesus' call on his/her life make sure you aim to ...

- use vocabulary that's simple, but not simplistic
- avoid the use of figurative language
- ask questions to make sure there's no confusion or ambiguity
- connect the invitation to a text or story in God's Word
- describe Jesus' character and deity (but don't use those words)
- and conclude the invitation with a carefully worded prayer