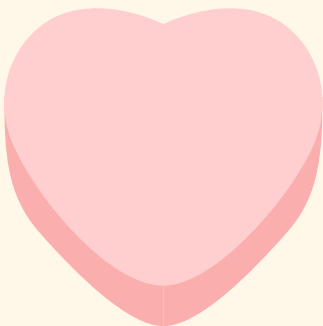
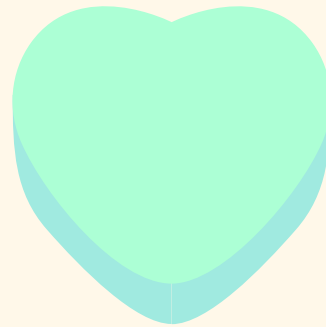
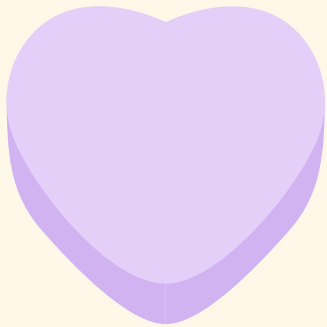


CJ Kids Conversation Starters



Hi CJ kids families!

We're so glad that you're here - because it means that you value talking to your kids and want to make the most of your time together! **WAY TO GO KINGDOM BUILDING GROWN UPS!**

Did you know that there are approximately **936 weeks** from the time a baby is born until they grow up and move to whatever is next - as adults? At every birthday, you get **52 weeks** of influence. We don't want to scare you with these stats but we believe that in most cases, when we see how much time we have left we tend to do more with the time we have **now!**

There are three important things to remember when cultivating the kind of relationship where your kids are constantly inspired to thrive and grow into the calling on their lives (placed there) by God himself.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Your kids need you to:

- Embrace their physical needs
- Engage their interests
- Affirm their personal journey
- Mobilize their potential

Every age and stage in a kid's life is important and there is a way to shape your conversations toward meeting those needs for each of these ages and stages. Each stage lays a foundation for what's coming next. Kids need to build trusting relationships with the adults that know them, love them and agree with the plans God has in that verse from the book of Jeremiah. Building block #1: Meaningful conversations.

Tips to start meaningful conversations with your kids:

Choose a time when you can give them your full attention

Riding together in the car, bath time, gathered around the dinner table or bed time are some good options to be available

Be consistent

A meaningful conversation is an opportunity. It can become a vulnerable space. Making time for these conversations on a regular basis shows that you value your kids and the time you spend with them

Pray

Before or after your conversations, invite God to abide in the space of this moment and trust the leading of His spirit to provide the words you speak and an open heart that you need

P.S. This is not going to be easy, but our hope is that you will see that it's worth it! We're here to support you and cheer you on! You have been specifically invited by God to parent this kid, made uniquely in the image of God and you can do this!

CJ Kids team

Here's what's inside

We have put together questions to serve as possible conversation starters with your kids based on their specific age and stage of development. Different needs are met at different times in a kid's life journey. Those needs are directly correlated with their personal faith journey. The more they talk about and learn about God, the more they will learn about themselves and how they fit into this great big world He made!

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Conversation Starters for One year-olds (Toddlers)

Making the most of the "I can do it & Am I safe?" phase

The phase when nobody's on time, everything's a mess, and one eager toddler will insist, "I can do it."

- **Who MADE you? (God!)**
- **Good Morning! I'm so glad you're awake! Look, it's the sun! Who made the sun? (God!)**
- **Goodnight! I'm so glad we get to take a rest now. Look, it's the moon! Who made the moon? (God!)**
- **Who LOVES you (other than mom and dad)? (God!)**
- **Who wants to be your friend forever and ever? (Jesus!)**
- ***On the way to church - Where are we going?***
- ***Learn your kids' small group leader's name and teach your toddler to become familiar with that name - Example: "Hey! Are you ready to see (leader's name) today? Will you fist bump them?"***
- **Where does Jesus live? (Answers will vary, "Your heart" is a simple and powerful answer)**
- **We're going to talk to God now!**
 - **Can you fold your hands like this? How about this? (try a few prayer hand variations)**
 - **Can you bow your head like this?**
 - **Where are your eyes? (That's right!) Can you try close your eyes like this?**
 - **Ready, set, here we go!**
- ***When cleaning up after playtime or meal time - Will we clean-up? Can you do it? Yes, you can!***

Conversation Starters for Two year-olds

Making the most of the “I can do it & Am I able?” phase

Every kid needs words over time to give them direction.

- **Do you know that Jesus loves you MORE than anything in the whole world? More than puzzles, candy, (add some stuff they love)?**
- **Is Jesus your friend?**
- **We love Jesus too! Does (insert family member’s name) love Jesus?**
- **Do you know that Jesus loves everyone, even your friends?**
- **Do you know that you can tell your friends that Jesus loves them? You can say: “Jesus loves YOU!”**
- **Do you know that you can talk to God? That’s called praying!**
- **Does (insert family member’s name) talk to Jesus?**
- **What is your favorite animal that God made?**
- **What is the funniest looking animal that God made?**
- **When is God with you? Is He with you...**
 - **When you wake up?**
 - **When you play with your toys?**
 - **When you take a nap?**
 - **When you eat dinner?**

Conversation Starters for Three & Four year-olds

Making the most of the “Why? & Am I okay?” phase

The phase when anything can be imagined, everything can be a game, and one curious preschooler wants to know, “Why?”

- What do you want to say “Thank you” to God for today?
- What song makes you happy? Do you want to sing it together?
- What did you make at church to bring home today?
- Close your eyes, Imagine a day that was really fun! What were your favorite things about that day?
- Follow up question, How do you feel after thinking happy thoughts? Good? Better, right? You can choose what you think about, choose things that are fun to think about!
- Do you know that God loves you even when you are feeling angry or sad?
- Will you throw this ball with me? Everytime we catch it - let’s say something we love that God made!
- Guess what day tomorrow is? Sunday! Where do we go on Sunday?
- Do you like your leader at church? Why are they: (choose an adjective based on their answer) fun, smart, nice? Awesome! I love people who are (insert adjective) too!
- I have this cool book! It’s called “the Bible” and it’s so important! Everything in this book is special. There is always a message just for you in a story from God. Do you want to hear one of the stories? (Here are some good tangible stories you can share with your preschooler)
 - God’s Creation: Adam & Eve (Genesis 1-3)
 - God keeps his promises: Noah and the Ark (Genesis 6-8)
 - God helps us be strong: David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
 - God gave us Jesus: Birth of Christ (Matthew 1 & Luke 1-2)
 - God gives us everything we need: Jesus feeds the 5000 (Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:10-17 & John 6: 5-15)

Conversation Starters for Kindergartners & First graders

Making the most of the “Look at me!” & Do I have your attention?” phase

The phase when unfiltered words make you laugh, school drop-off makes you cry, and life becomes a stage where your kid shouts, “Look at me!”

- Do you know that Jesus loves you MORE than anything in the world?
- Are you worried or upset? Will you draw a picture of what is making you feel that way, and then show me?
- I can't fix everything for you all the time, but do you know that I'm always here to listen?
- Sometimes, scary things happen in our world, but do you know that God is always with you? Do you know that you can talk to Him anytime you want?
- What do you want me to know, that you learned about at church today?
- This is what I'm feeling right now, how are you doing?
- If you could ask God anything, what would you ask Him?
- What's your favorite question to be asked?
- Do you need God's help with anything today?
- Who do you see everyday that needs to have a friend like Jesus? How can you be that?

Conversation Starters for Second & Third graders

Making the most of the “Sounds like fun! & Do I have what it takes?” phase

The phase when fairness matters most, differences get noticed, and your enthusiastic kid thinks anything “sounds like fun!”

- Do you think your friends would have fun if they came to church like you?
- Have you ever thought about inviting them to come to church with you?
- Will you give a name of the worry that is floating around in your brain?
- What’s one thought you keep having over and over again? (Good or bad)
- How can I help the next time you feel nervous?
- Sometimes I worry about little things just as much as big things. Are there any little things on your mind that you want to talk about?
- Do you pray by yourself?
- Do you ever feel like you have questions when you pray/talk to God? Do you ever ask Him?
- How do you decide if someone is a good friend?
- What’s cool about meeting someone from a different country?

Conversation Starters for Fourth & Fifth graders

Making the most of the “I’ve got this! & Do I have friends?” phase

The phase when friends are best friends, games are for competition, and your confident kid will insist, “I’ve got this.”

- What is the name of your favorite friend from school/church? What do you like about them?
- What’s one person (it could be a kid or an adult) that you wish came to church with us on Sundays?
- Do you think we should invite them to come? Would you like to do that yourself?
- What’s taking up the most space in your brain today?
- Do you ever worry about stuff? Even little things?
- (Follow up) What is the worry telling you?
- Is the worry telling you the truth?
- Is there anyone at school or at church who gives you a hard time? Anybody who makes you uncomfortable?
- We live in a world where some pretty scary things happen. Do any of those ever worry you?
- How do you let things go when they are out of your control? How do you decide what is in your control and what is not?

More resources

We realize some of these questions could lead to some bigger conversations. We're here to equip you with tools to help answer these questions and we want to come alongside you for these moments. We're in this together!

Contact the CJ Kids team: Family@ChristJourney.org.

In some situations, the wisest choice is to consult with your pediatrician or a licensed counselor. **Seeking professional help isn't a sign of failure as a parent.** Being a good parent doesn't mean you are the source of everything your child needs, but it does mean that you reach out when you realize a situation is beyond your resources.

We have a long standing relationship with Wellspring Counseling and collaborate with this team often! *Wellspring is a non-profit counseling center and outreach ministry that provides mental health services and education in a professional, Christian and holistic way in order to bring about transforming change in individuals, communities and for generations to come.*

Contact Wellspring: Wellspringmiami.org

Wellspring Main office
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