



D.L. Moody, famous preacher of the nineteenth century, came into his office one day smiling. He told his secretary that he had just led one and a half people to Christ. She was curious and inquired as to how he could lead one and a half people to Christ. Moody replied that he had just led a man and his son to saving faith in Jesus. The secretary said, "Oh, I see. The man was the one, and because his child was so small, he was the half." Moody's face went from a smile to a serious expression and he replied, "Oh, no. It's quite the other way around. You see, the man's life is half over, but the little boy still has his whole life to live for the Lord. The little boy is the one and the man is the half."

What we believe

About Faith & Children

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A Church for the Community

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Jesus said, "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14

At First Pres San Mateo, we believe that a child's faith is important, and we are committed to coming alongside parents to partner in their child's faith development. Our mission statement for Children's Ministries reflects this belief:

The Mission of Children's Ministries at First Presbyterian Church San Mateo is to teach children the truth of God's love for them, lead them to receive Jesus as Savior, and to equip families to nurture their children's growing faith.

We believe that children have the capacity, the ability and the desire to invite Christ to be their personal Savior, and we are committed to helping children understand what it means to "be a follower of Jesus". Our entire ministry to children is built on the premise that children grow in their faith, just as they grow physically.



Many parents have questions about their children's faith development, and our Children's Director or any of our Pastors are always happy to speak with parents about these issues. Our church library, as well as our Children's Director, have excellent resources available for parents. In this pamphlet, we'll address some of those questions that parents most frequently ask. Please feel free to call our Children's Ministry office at any time for more in-depth information.

What does it mean for a child to "become a Christian"?

Children, just like adults, become a Christian by making a conscious decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. A child who becomes a Christian understands:

- God loves me
- I have sinned (disobeyed God)
- Jesus took the punishment for my sins by dying on the cross
- God has forgiven me
- I am a part of God's family forever

Accepting Christ can be an experience that is sudden (like the Apostle Paul as described in Acts 9:1-19), or gradual - over time - (like Timothy described in 2 Timothy 1:4-5), but either conversion is definite. Christ comes into a child's life through the Holy Spirit, and the child has a place in God's Kingdom forever.

At what age might a child be ready to do this?

There is no place in the Bible where an age-limit is defined for salvation (either a minimum or a maximum!), and there are no hard and fast rules here. Children as young as two or three years-old may be able to understand the message of the gospel, and may be ready to ask Jesus to be their Savior. Certainly by age six or seven, children are able to grasp the requirements for Salvation and to make a decision that they understand. Any child, regardless of age, who expresses a desire to become a Christian should be given that opportunity.

Will my child be pressured to do this at programs at the church?

No. We do not believe that *any* person should be coerced or pressured into accepting Christ. However, the message of Salvation is presented throughout the programs in our

Children's Ministry, and children are often given opportunities to make this decision for themselves.

How will I know if my child makes this commitment?

If your child accepts Christ while in one of our programs, we will make every effort to let you know! You will receive a pamphlet entitled "Next Steps for Children Who Accept Christ", and the teacher who was with your child at the time of commitment would enjoy the opportunity to speak with you personally.

What do we need to know about Baptism and Communion?

In our church, we have two sacraments: baptism and communion. These two sacraments are important to all who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and we encourage parents to see the brochure, "Children and the Sacraments" for information on how their children can participate in these. We also offer an annual class for parents and children about baptism and communion; please call our Children's Ministry office to find out about the next scheduled class.

