

Answers to Questions Children Ask

Top Tips for Answering Questions

1. Be Brief

Keep your answer short to maintain interest and the flow of the lesson.

2. Be Biblical

Where possible, allow children to see where your answer comes from in the Bible.

3. Be Choosey

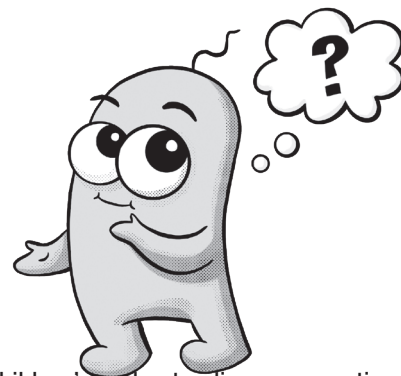
Some questions have more learning potential than others. Focus on questions that support children's understandings, connections, and the lesson aim.

4. Be Respectful

Be respectful of other points of view. Ground your statements as personal experiences, or from the Bible - 'I believe', 'Christians believe', 'The Bible says'. Some teachers find it helpful to imagine the parents and school principal present in the classroom.

5. Be Thoughtful

Give yourself some time to think by acknowledging 'That's a great question.' Clarify the question, and invite the rest of the class into the discussion by asking, 'What do you think?', 'What do others think?'



Note: Some issues should be avoided due to their controversial nature. Even careful answers can be misinterpreted. Each student is only in your class because their parent/guardian allows it. Avoid issues such as hell, evil spirits as well as family types, gender and political issues. Acknowledge the child, suggest they discuss it at home, then return to the lesson.

Further resources on answering questions will be available. Check back on our website from time to time.

The Questions

Page 2: Questions About God & Jesus

- Does God know me?
- What happens to people who don't believe in God?
- If you've done something really bad, does God still like you?
- Why don't things happen now like in the Bible?
- Is God true?
- How old is God?
- Is God's power magic?
- Where did Jesus get his powers?
- Is that picture of God, or Jesus?

Page 3: Questions About Santa, The Easter Bunny & Halloween

- Is Santa real?
- Is the Easter Bunny true?
- Is Halloween bad?

Page 4: Questions About Heaven

- What happens when we die?
- Do animals go to heaven when they die?
- Are ghosts real?
- Will I go to heaven?
- Will bad people be in heaven?
- Is hell real?
- Where is heaven?
- What will we do in heaven
- When I die will I become an angel?

Page 5: Why doesn't God stop bad things happening?

Questions About God & Jesus

Does God know me?

There's nothing hidden from God. God knows every person, including you. God knows all about you, the good things and the bad things and he still thinks you're great. God also wants you to make the most of your life and will help you if you ask him.

What happens to people who don't believe in God?

The Bible tells us that God planned from the beginning that people would be with him forever. People who don't want anything to do with God miss out on so much that's good, but God lets us choose. Note: Avoid discussion of hell. Stick to the positive.

Some people want to believe but they honestly can't. God wants us to be honest and not fake it. People who want to believe can pray and ask God to show them that he is real and he will, even if it takes a long time. Don't give up. You can ask God to help you believe. You can pray for other people too. In the Bible God promises that people who want to find God will, when they try with all their heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

If you've done something really bad, does God still like you?

God doesn't like the bad things we do, but he is always ready to show us kindness, even when we have done the wrong thing. That's why God sent Jesus into the world (John 3:16-17). We can say sorry and ask God to forgive us. The Bible says that God loves us with an 'everlasting love'. That means that nothing we can do, or not do will stop God loving us.

Why don't things happen now like in the Bible?

They do. Ask God to show you what he's doing in the world. It's amazing!

You can also refer to our lessons based on stories of contemporary followers of Jesus.

Is God true?

God is true even if we don't believe in him. We can research information to tell us about Jesus and that he really lived on earth, in the countries in the Middle East. Archaeologists have made discoveries that confirm a lot of the Bible events. Millions of people alive today believe God's Spirit lives in them.

How old is God?

God hasn't got an age. He's what we call eternal. That means he's always been here and always will be. The Bible starts with the words 'In the beginning God...' God was here before anyone, or anything.

Is God's power magic?

God has power over the world because he made it. God's power is much stronger than things like magic tricks and special effects. God can do things that no one else can do. When God uses his power we call it a miracle.

Where did Jesus get his powers?

Jesus was a real human but he was unlike any human who ever lived. Jesus was God's Son who came to earth to show us what God is like. Jesus showed he was God's Son when he did things that only God could do. Jesus has power from God.

Is that picture of God, or Jesus?

God is a spirit and he's invisible. We can't draw God because he doesn't have a body. Jesus was a real human with a body like us. Many artists draw pictures and videos to help us imagine what it would have been like when Jesus was on earth.

Questions About Santa, The Easter Bunny & Halloween

Is Santa real?

Ask 'What do you think?' This will help you gauge why the student is asking. Try a non-committal answer, e.g. 'Lots of people make a big fuss about Santa, but for me, Jesus is the important part of Christmas and Jesus is with us all year around'. Enough said. Move on with the lesson.

If you find yourself in the middle of a full on discussion you can't avoid, you could include:

- Different people believe different things about Santa and different families and different countries have different traditions. Suggest they talk with their parents about it.
- Some say that the Santa tradition came from a man called St Nicholas who lived in Turkey many years ago and secretly gave presents to children in need. St Nicholas was probably a real person and the idea of giving to people in need is good all year round.
- The Christmas story, about the birth of Jesus, is recorded in the Bible and has been celebrated as a real event for thousands of years.
- How do we know who is more important, Santa or Jesus? The date, the calendar that we base daily planning on, is calculated from the time Jesus was born. It's the most important event in the history of the world.

Do NOT be the one to say, 'Santa isn't real!' They'll find out soon enough.

Is the Easter Bunny true?

The Easter bunny and chocolate eggs are fun, but the deepest meaning of Easter is all about new life and things being fresh and new. Eggs are a reminder of a new life that's about to happen. What happens when the egg hatches? (A new life comes out!)

What's the new life in the Easter story? (Jesus died, but he came alive again on Easter Sunday) So when we think of the Easter Bunny bringing eggs it's a good reminder of the new life that God gives because Jesus died for us and came alive at Easter.

Is Halloween Bad?

Lots of people have different ideas (or opinions) about Halloween, including people who follow Jesus. Some believe it is not good to celebrate things that are scary or evil. The Bible tells us to focus on what is good (Phil 4:8) Others believe it is a good opportunity to tell neighbours and friends about how much Jesus loves them and that Jesus is like a light in the darkness (John 8:12). You might like to talk to your parents about what is the best thing to do for your family.

Questions About Heaven

Be very careful when answering these questions.

Children may have had experiences of pets or loved ones dying. Families may have different views. Stick to the short answers and return to the lesson.

What happens when we die?

When we die our life on earth is finished. Our spirit leaves our body and goes to God. Those who love God live again with God in heaven.

Do animals go to heaven when they die?

When Jesus died he made it possible for the whole world to be right with God again, not just people. Even though people are special to God, animals are part of heaven too. Even ones that don't normally get along (like lions and lambs) are at peace together in heaven (Isaiah 11:6-7).

Are ghosts real?

Spirits are invisible but real and there are good and bad spirits. God is a spirit and God's Holy Spirit is more powerful than any other spirit. The sort of ghosts you see in movies and TV shows could just be imagination or evil spirits trying to trick us. People have different opinions. The Bible says to stay right away from such things (1 Corinthians 10:20b) but when we trust God we don't need to be afraid of them because God is stronger.

Will I go to heaven?

Because of Jesus, anyone who wants to live under God's rule, can go to heaven. God wants everyone to live with him in heaven, but he lets us choose.

Will bad people be in heaven?

No one except Jesus is good enough for God's perfect heaven. We've all done bad things, but God forgives and welcomes all those who want to live his way.

Is hell real?

Heaven is where God rules and hell is the opposite, where there's nothing of God or goodness at all. Note: Avoid further discussion. Return to the lesson.

Where is heaven?

Heaven is not a place you can go to, like a town or country. Heaven is where God rules and everything is the way God wants. Those who belong to Jesus don't have to worry about how to get there because when they die, Jesus will take them there (John 14:1-3).

What will we do in heaven?

The Bible doesn't say exactly but it gives pictures about what heaven will be like including -

- A never ending wedding party for God and his people
- A peaceful garden in a beautiful city.
- In heaven things will be peaceful, good and right because everyone will do exactly what God wants.

When I die will I become an angel?

When we die, the bodies that we have now will change, but we won't turn into angels. God created both people and angels to serve him, but he made them different. Angels live in heaven with God, coming to earth when God directs them, to help and protect humans. When we go to heaven we'll serve God as humans, not angels.

Why Doesn't God Stop Bad Things Happening?

As Christians we want to convey the faith and hope we have that in the end all will be well but children are only too aware that in the meantime there is a lot of suffering in the world and we don't understand all the reasons.

Here are some points you can use when discussing this with primary aged students using everyday language.

1. The world is broken.

When God made the world, it was very good. When people chose to disobey God and live their own way, instead of the way God wanted, bad things came into the world. The world is broken. There are good things and bad things. Sometimes bad things happen because the world is broken. Sometimes bad things happen because people make wrong choices. God lets us choose what we do. When bad things happen we can ask ourselves 'Is there anything I should do differently?'

2. God Cares.

The Bible is full of stories of people who prayed for God's help when bad things happened. God wants us to pray with him. God always helps - but sometimes it might be different to what we expect. God loves us so much he sent Jesus to fix the brokenness in the world. Jesus showed people how to live the way God wants - by loving God and loving others. God helps people do that.

3. God can help good things come from bad things.

God doesn't make bad things happen, but he can use them for good. Sometimes what starts out looking disastrous turns out to be good in the end. The Bible says 'All things work together for good to those who love God...' (Romans 8:28)

Sometimes hard times can actually be good for people and communities. They show kindness and work together in a way they wouldn't otherwise. We need to look for the good as well as the bad in these situations. Sometimes it takes time. Jesus' friends were in the terrible storm. It was so bad they thought they were going to die. God doesn't take away bad happenings but he's with us in them.

4. Ask: How can I help?

Kids and adults can be part of this too. God is in control of his world. One day God will make everything in the world good and right again. Until then God allows people to live as they want and shape the world they live in. God wants us to work with him in making this world totally good.

Jesus did that. When he was on earth he stood against what was bad and brought good out of it. When bad things look like happening we can pray against them. When people have been hurt we can help.

5. Pray.

Pray for your students, particularly during difficult times that your hope and trust in God will shine through and give them something to hang on to.