

“Take MY **Yolk** Upon You”

And Other Phrases
Your Kids Might Not
Understand

As a little girl growing up in New York City, I wondered where Jesus bought His eggs. Did He buy them at the A&P like my mother? One thing was certain: Jesus had a huge supply of eggs. How did I know this? I learned in Sunday school that Jesus said, “Take My *yolk* upon you.” I loved Jesus with all of my little girl heart, and if He thought it was necessary to egg me, I was willing to be egged for Jesus. As a city kid who had never seen a farm, a farmer, or a farm animal, when I heard the word *yoke*, I visualized the yellow part of an egg. I could have asked my parents to explain the yolk thing, but I didn’t know it needed explaining. My parents had no way of knowing their little girl was waiting for an egging from on high.

How about your kids, Mom and Dad? Do you know for sure they comprehend Christianese terms we use so often? If you prodded your children to explain what they think it means to “ask Jesus to live in your heart” or be “washed in the blood,” you might be surprised by their answers. It couldn’t hurt to have some conversations about your conversations. Here are a few child-confusing Christianese terms.

By Marie Armenia



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"If Jesus is so big, how does He fit inside my heart?"

We ask kids, "Do you want to ask Jesus to live in your heart?" They nod "yes." But according to the scores of people who responded to my completely unscientific e-mail and Facebook surveys, I can tell you that the *living in my heart* thing really whacks kids out.

Brandon, a 4-year-old living in Missouri, told his mom, "Jesus must not feel good today because my tummy really hurts." When the doctor asked 6-year-old Adam to stick out his tongue, the young boy asked, "Can you see Jesus down there? Can you take

Him out so I can see Him?" Sue

Hines, a grandmother was asked by her granddaughter, Stella, "Grams, how does Jesus get inside your heart and live there? How does He become that small?"

Truth is, Jesus doesn't physically live in the heart of every believer. His Spirit lives inside us — not a miniature, action-figure Jesus. Do your kids realize this? Do they understand what really happens when they become God's children? Do you know what's going on in the hearts of your children as they ask Jesus to "live there?"

"Washed in the blood" Is there anything more precious to us than the blood of Jesus? Absolutely not. But

this phrase scares lots of kids who are too afraid to admit it. Being washed in blood — even if it is Jesus' blood — doesn't appeal to a child. Zach, 5, was terrified to go near the baptismal in his church. He thought it was filled with Jesus' actual blood. His dad tells me, "I'm grateful that the Lord allowed me to understand why Zach was afraid. I took the time to listen to his fears. Zach is no longer afraid when he hears that term; he understands that it's symbolic." Do your children understand that we are not covered by the literal blood of Jesus?

"I'm standing on the Word, Dad!"

Tyler, 6, desperately wanted to go to Disney World. His family couldn't afford such a luxury, especially since his father had recently lost his job at a local manufacturing plant. Tyler heard his parents talking to family members about trusting God during these trying times. One day, Tyler's dad walked in to Tyler's room to see his son intently praying while standing on top of a huge family Bible. "What are you doing, son?" his dad asked. Tyler matter-of-factly responded, "I'm standing on the Word, Dad, asking God to let us go to Disney World. I'm standing on the Word like you and Mom are doing to get you a new job."

Tyler's dad explained that "standing on the Word" was simply a way of saying, "I'm believing every promise in

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God's Word. I'm believing God's promise to always help His children." What do your children know about prayer? About faith? About God's Word? Ask them. Explain. Then pray.

"If you were the only one alive ..." Becky Alderfer, a worship leader in Pennsylvania, says, "I was always confused when people told me that if I were the only one alive, Jesus still would have died for me. If I were the only one alive, then would I have to be the one to kill Him? I didn't want to do that."

What do your children understand about the love of God? Have you explained that God's love is universal and personal? Do your children grasp that although God loves the world, He loves each child specifically? If you asked your children to explain God's love, what would they say?

The Cure for Christianese Disease: "A father will make Your faithfulness known to children" (Isaiah 38:19). We love our kids. We want them to love Jesus. Remember that the real goal in speaking to our children

about God is for them to have a relationship with Him.

So, disciple your children by speaking with them about your relationship with God. Speak about God's faithfulness. Tell them stories about how God has been at work in your life. Reveal the love affair that's going on between you and God. Remember the glory of the gospel, and let your children see the glow it creates in your heart.

What's the best way to have soul-deep conversations with your children? Create a distraction-free atmosphere. Turn off the TV. Put down the cell phone. Send the unspoken message that discussing God is important to you. Let your children know you want to explain whatever they don't understand. And then, speak in a language they will understand. Thankfully, Christianese Disease is *not* fatal. The cure is found in every childlike heart — no matter how many years that heart has been beating. □

Marie Armenia now knows the difference between the words "yolk" and "yoke" and is an expert at scrambling one and not scrambling away from the other one.

VeggieTales to the Rescue!



VeggieTales movies have always been great at helping explain difficult Bible topics to your children. The newest release, "Twas the Night Before Easter," explains

the true meaning of Easter based on Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life — a ransom for many."

Sometimes It's the Songs We Sing

As her mother tucked her into bed, 7-year-old Abby said, "Mom, I'm starting to worry about God." Her mom was startled and said, "Worried about God? Honey, what do you mean?" Abby continued, "God never sleeps, right?" Her mom answered, "Yes, honey, that's right, God never sleeps." Abby sat up in bed, looked straight in to her mother's eyes, and said, "We've got to pray that He gets some sleep, Mom. He's exhausted. We sang about it in children's praise service on Sunday: 'He is exhausted, the King is exhausted on high.' What if He falls asleep instead of watching over us tonight?"

Thankfully for Abby, her mom explained that the song is titled "He Is Exalted" and what exalted means. Abby slept peacefully, knowing the One who is watching over her wasn't going to nod off.

Abby isn't alone in hearing slightly different lyrics to a well-known hymn or song. A few others include:

"Andy walks with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am his own." A mom was recently asked, "Mom, who's Andy? I can never see him." — from "In the Garden"

"Up From the Gravy, A Rose" is what Neil Enloe, Dove Award-winning songwriter, thought he was singing

when he was a child in church on Easter. — from "He Arose"

"It Is Swell With My Soul" — Melody Tunney, award-winning songwriter and founding member of the group First Call, says that for most of her childhood she sang the wonderful, affirming hymn of the church: "It

Is Swell With My Soul." Her word change was also pretty accurate. — from "It Is Well With My Soul"

"There Is a Bomb in Gilead" Many people grew up waiting for Gilead to explode. — from "There Is a Balm in Gilead"

Parents, as you explain common Christian phrases, also clearly communicate the true meaning behind some of our most beloved hymns and spiritual songs.