



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

WHAT IS MERCY? Mercy is not being punished when we deserve to be punished. Mercy is the withholding, or the cancellation, of a judgment and a condemnation which are just and completely deserved.

GOD IS MERCIFUL

Mercy is, first and foremost, an attribute or characteristic of God. Mercy is an integral part of His character. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:5 that

GOD IS RICH IN MERCY. God is full of mercy and as a merciful God He is full of pity, slow to punish and swift and ready to forgive. That mercy was especially displayed by the Lord Jesus when He died on the cross to provide salvation to a world which did not deserve it. Paul writes in Titus 3:5 "According to His mercy He saved us."

THE RICHES OF HIS MERCY

We are saved because of His mercy.

GOD GIVES MERCY

Mercy is A GIFT from God. When we ask Him for mercy, and ask Him to save us, He, in His mercy, does so immediately. He cancels all the judgment and punishment we deserved and would have received for our sin against Him. And the reason why He, a just and righteous God, could do that, was because His Son had taken that punishment when He died on the cross. Peter writes to his readers "Now you HAVE OBTAINED (received) MERCY." (1 Peter 2:10). It's wonderful to be able to say, as a believer, "I have received God's gift of mercy, I will NEVER be punished for my sin"

GOD'S MERCY IS AVAILABLE FOR EVERYONE

No-one can, or should, say "I am too bad to receive God's mercy. He could not possibly forgive me." Paul writes in his epistles that he had been "the chief of sinners." (1 Timothy 1: 15) He was confident that no-one had sinned more than he had. He had persecuted and killed Christians, wrecked churches, blasphemed, and denied the Lord Jesus. But our merciful God spoke to him and worked in his heart and life so that and he could now write "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy " (1 Timothy 1:13) and the Bible tells us in 1 Timothy 1:16 that Paul was an example of what God could do in the life of ANYONE who believed as he did.

Have you sincerely asked God to give you His mercy and forgive all your sin?

Welcome

Are you looking for help in your ministry to children? The door is open! Come right in!



Are you looking for encouragement and growth in your Christian life? The door is open! Come right in!

Read these four pages of Mini Mag. There you will find something which will help you in your life and ministry. Good! Be sure to come back again next month. And, of course, you can also download the preceding 20 Mini Mags!

WE NEED TO BE MERCIFUL

Mercy is one of God's attributes which He wants us to imitate and develop in our lives. He wants us to become merciful and compassionate to others (even if they have wronged us)—as He has been to us. Our privilege as children's workers is not only to PREACH the mercy of God but also to PRACTISE it. The Lord Jesus says in Luke 6:36 "Be therefore merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful", and He promises that those who are merciful will receive mercy (Matt. 5:7).

Is there someone to whom you need to show mercy and forgive them?

We can learn many valuable lessons about children and our responsibility to them right through the Bible. Last month, we saw, for example, how God challenged and instructed His people in the early chapters of Deuteronomy to TEACH their children the Word of God if they were going to prosper as a nation and be blessed in the future. And the same challenge applies to us to-day. But He also, in these chapters and in later chapters in the book, made it clear that the quality and results of this teaching depended upon those who taught the children. So He gave them, (and also those of us who teach our children) three commands.

1) WE NEED TO LOVE HIM.

The quality and effect of our teaching depends to a large extent on our relationship with our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the first priority for everyone who works with children is to trust Him as our personal Saviour and to serve Him as our Lord. In the closing days of His earthly ministry the Lord Jesus asked Peter three key questions. "Do you love Me?" When Peter replied "You know that I love you" (John 21:15) in answer to the first question, the Lord Jesus gave him the commission and command to work with and feed children.

2) WE NEED TO KNOW GOD'S WORD.

We need to know it for our own spiritual development. We cannot teach what we do not know. Therefore, His Word should be in our hearts and not just in our heads. (Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:6). We also need to know His Word so that we can know what to teach the children from what He has written, to show them how to be saved, and how to grow spiritually

3).WE NEED TO BE GOOD TEACHERS AND WE NEED TO KNOW.....

...HOW TO TEACH We should teach children "diligently" (Deuteronomy 6:7). The word used means "impress" or

Understanding

Children

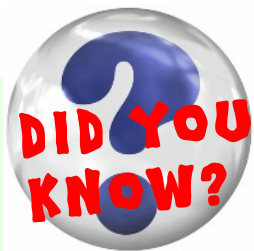
"sharpen" and emphasises that we should be thorough in our teaching and not just tell stories.

...WHERE TO TEACH We should be ready to teach anywhere "inside or outside" (Deut. 6:7, 11: 19,20) as opportunity presents itself. Homes, Sunday Schools, Good News Clubs are good examples of "inside teaching" and open air 5-Day Clubs are a good example of "outside teaching."

...WHEN TO TEACH At any time, whether it be morning or evening or in between. (Deut 6: 7, 11:19). Teaching children is not just part of our Sunday programme. There can also be opportunities on other days of the week.

...WHAT TO TEACH It is important that we concentrate our teaching on the Word of God, described as "My Words" (Deut. 4:10) "these words of mine" (Deut. 11:18-21,) "these commandments" (Deut 6:6,7) and "all the words of this law" (Deut. 31:12,13). God promises to bless us and the children we teach when we know and obey His Word.

...WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT God promised His people in Deut. 6:3 that if they teach the children His Word(s) it would be "well with them" and "that they would multiply greatly." AND THE SAME PROMISES APPLY TO-DAY



That teaching, like painting or cooking, is an art or skill to be mastered, and that it is governed by a number of principles?

The teacher who understands these principles and puts them into practice will be a good and effective teacher. Here are six of the most basic and most important of these principles:

1. **TEACH-DON'T JUST TALK.** It's not enough to say or state something. You need to explain it.
2. **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Use words and concepts which the children understand and can relate to.
3. **DON'T TRY TO TEACH TOO MUCH.** Make it your goal to teach less, and teach it more thoroughly.
4. **USE ILLUSTRATIONS** A story told or a picture shown can light up the darkness and bring light..
5. **REPETITION IS ESSENTIAL** Few understand the first time they hear it. They need to hear it again and again.
6. **BE PRACTICAL** You should always apply what you have taught to the every day life of the children.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

QUESTION: How can I get children to come to my meeting each week?

ANSWER: We cannot teach children if they do not come. Therefore our first responsibility is to do all we can to encourage them to do so. How?

- **BY PLANNING CAREFULLY.** Be sure that the place for the meeting, the day and time on which it is held, are all suitable for the children to come.
- **BY CONTACTING THE PARENTS** "face to face." Visit each home in your area, introduce yourself, explain what you plan to do and invite their children.
- **BY CONTACTING THE CHILDREN** You can do this, accompanied by another person or child to avoid suspicion, by personal invitation. Let them know you have spoken with their parents. It is a big help if you could print little invitation cards with details of the meeting. You could also distribute these cards outside the gates of the local school..
- **BY MAKING YOUR MEETING INTERESTING, RELEVANT AND ATTRACTIVE.** If you don't do this, they might stop coming.
- **BY ENCOURAGING THE CHILDREN WHO COME TO INVITE OTHERS** You could even organise a competition to see who can bring the most newcomers.
- **BY ORGANISING SPECIAL EVENTS OR PARTIES** at Christmas and Easter or with a visit of a missionary.

Teaching Children



Last month we outlined a typical programme for your 60-minute meeting with children and the first activity on the list was SINGING. About 15 minutes of your programme should be devoted to singing and it should be spread through your programme. Singing is important because it is an attractive and effective way to teach Bible truth to the children. Singing also gives them the opportunity to express themselves, to take part in the meeting and to become active participants instead of passive listeners.

WHAT SHOULD YOU SING?

You need to choose your choruses or songs before the meeting and write them down in your teaching programme. They could be Gospel choruses addressed to the unsaved children present, or "Christian living choruses" addressed to the saved children, or "doctrinal choruses" to help both groups. When choosing your choruses ask yourself these questions:

- Does the chorus teach truth, perhaps linked to the truth you will teach in your lesson?
- Are the words understandable to the children? You may need to explain some of them.
- Is the tune easy to learn and sing. Avoid choruses which are "meaningless jingle."
- Is it suitable for your age group? Teen-agers are not keen on action choruses.

HOW CAN YOU ENCOURAGE THE CHILDREN TO SING?

- Sing a few good familiar choruses each week, but periodically introduce a new chorus. Don't keep singing the same chorus all the time.
- Sing choruses which state facts rather than those which express feelings (which may not be genuine)
- Show and explain to the children how the chorus relates to them.
- Action choruses are good with younger children.
- It is a help to visualise, at least, some of your choruses with flashcards, which children can display as you sing. Or you can put them on power point.
- You will find it helpful if you spread your singing throughout your programme.

A POSSIBLE PROBLEM

If you feel you have no singing ability or cannot lead singing what can you do? Ask someone else to direct and lead the singing or find someone to accompany with a guitar or use recordings of the music and words.



ACEW

Comments from those who have used our publications

"By the grace of God I have found all your books very handy literature for "would be teachers." I use them to whet their appetite and prepare their hearts to offer service to their Lord in a more effective way. The books have also opened the eyes of interested partners to the need to reach boys and girls with the Gospel of our Lord." (From Nigeria)

"Thank you from all our hearts for the many books you have distributed to us" (From CEF Cambodia)

"Your books have challenged and changed lives all over our nation, and Heaven will reveal the results"(From CEF Zimbabwe)



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

We all need HELP and encouragement in our lives and in our ministry to children. With that need in mind, we published our first book back in 1996, and it was entitled "The Problems of a Children's Worker, and God's Solution". We wanted to show from the Bible the reality of the problems faced by children's workers and in the lives of many Christians. Many thousands of copies of this book have been printed and distributed all over the world in many languages. One worker wrote "I have read your book. It was a dose of medicine taken at the right time. I was on the point of leaving my ministry because of the problems I was facing. Your book did just what you wrote it for. It helped me to focus upon God and not myself."

You can download this book at www.CEFBookMinistry.com and receive the help you need to overcome any problems you have in your life or ministry.

History of Children's Evangelism

So far in our historical survey we have studied and honoured individual men and women, the PEOPLE who played key roles in this history, and we have discovered that the two main PLACES, where children were taught God's Word from Bible times onward, were in the HOME by PARENTS and in the CHURCH with their parents. There seems to have been no systematic outreach by parents or church to large groups of unsaved children until the 18th century. During the following two centuries God raised up four great ORGANISATIONS to reach out to these unsaved children with teaching from the Word of God and with the presentation of the Gospel, and God has blessed all four of them.

The first of these four organisations was the SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT. It was founded in 1757 by Robert Raikes, a Christian business man in Gloucester. In those days working class children worked for 12 hours a day six days a week in the mills and sweatshops. There were no schools for them and no time to attend one. Robert started a school for them in the home of a Christian lady on a Sunday (their only free day) and engaged teachers to teach them how to read and write but with the Bible as their text book. Several others started to do the same in homes, rented halls, and some of them even constructed buildings specifically for this purpose. Robert then wrote a book about this work and similar schools sprang up all over the country. At first, the churches were not enthusiastic about this Movement, but they began to see the possibilities and potential of these "Sunday Schools" and, eventually, they became the evangelistic



Robert Raikes

outreach of many churches to children. By 1831 1,250,000 children were attending Sunday School each week in England and the Movement had also spread to USA, Canada, Ireland, Europe and many other countries.

The early schools taught reading, arithmetic and a knowledge of the Bible, but in later years, as universal education was provided, they concentrated more on catechism classes held mostly on Sunday afternoons.

However, in the 20th century, Sunday Schools have declined in a number of countries. But what a wonderful ministry the Sunday School Movement has had for many years. It has reached and given spiritual help to millions of children. What the teachers taught depended on them. I am sure that many of them taught the way of salvation and while they did not have the training and aids that to-day's teachers have, I am convinced

that many children were saved through the teaching of God's Word.

We want to honour this great Movement and, at the same time, we want to salute you, Robert Raikes, who was raised up by God to bring it into existence, and we welcome you into our Mini Mag Hall of Fame.

The Mini Mag HALL of FAME

Personal advice from the Author

I often wondered why God would call a young muscular rugby player with no musical ability to work with children. But, believing that this was His will for me, my wife and I decided to start our first CEF Good News Club, the first one in Ireland, in our home. I was to lead it each week, but the main problems were that I had very little ability as a singer, and that I did not know any choruses which the children could sing. But God had called me and I believed that He would help me and HE DID. A Christian friend heard about my predicament and offered to meet with me every week, teach me at least one chorus, and show me how to lead the singing. And, as a result, everything

HE WILL MEET YOUR EVERY NEED

went well each week and I learned the great truth that when God calls you to do something, He promises to supply whatever you need to do it.

Since then, I have seen this happen in the lives and ministries of many others. For example, God called two young men whom I met, to minister to children. One had a serious speech problem and the other was unusually shy. But they both obeyed that call. God helped them to overcome those problems and they have ministered to children and teachers for many years. Is God calling you to do something which seems impossible? TRUST HIM. HE WILL MEET YOUR NEED.

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Director of the ACEW Trust, and Kenneth Martin, Chairman of the ACEW Trust.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's 70 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at www.CEFBookMinistry.com.

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