



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

"If I have found grace in Your sight show me (Moses) Your way that I may know You" (Exodus 33:13)

The first and greatest desire of every believer is, or should be, to KNOW GOD. But how can we know God? That is the question. It is interesting that God has, in the Bible, deliberately chosen the word "know" to express what He wants us to do in relation to Him. He wants us to know Him, to be acquainted with Him, to enter into a personal relationship with Him.

We use the same word "know" in everyday life and in our relationship with other people. How do we get to know another person – a friend, a child, a co-worker? If the house next door is empty and we hear that someone has bought it, we look forward to getting to know our new neighbour. But how can

A PLAN TO FOLLOW

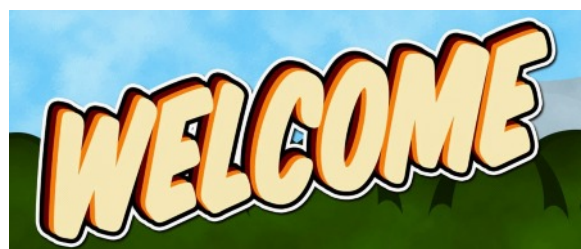
we get to know him? There are four steps we can follow to do so:

- ▶ Even before he comes, and after he comes, we try to LEARN as much as possible about him, and we ask questions like "Is he married?" "Does he have children?" "How old is he?" "What does he do?"
- ▶ We need to spend time LOOKING at him after he arrives. As we watch him and see what he does, we will come to know him better.
- ▶ We need to spend time LISTENING to him and hearing what he wants to say. This interaction tells us so much about him.
- ▶ When we have learned about him, looked at him and listened to him, we start to LIVE beside him and we spend time with each other and have fellowship together, and as we do this we really get to know him, and we become good friends.

Did you note the four key words which show us how to get to know our neighbours? They also apply to how we can know God.

- We need to LEARN all we can about God --from His Word.
- We need to LOOK at Him as He has revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ.
- We need to LISTEN to Him as He speaks to us in His Word.
- We need to LOVE HIM and LIVE with Him in close fellowship and communion.

We will look at these four "steps", one by one, in the issues of Mini Mag which follow each month.



Welcome to the latest issue of Mini Mag. It contains a number of sections which you should find helpful for your devotional life and for your ministry to the children. We want to be practical and answer the questions you might have. Questions like "How can I know God?" or "How can I be a better teacher?" or "What does God tell me about my children.?" If we help you find the answers to these questions in this issue, and many other questions in later issues, please let us know, and please encourage other children's workers to download this Mini Mag and all the previous issues, free of charge, at www.cefbokministry.com

We always need to remind ourselves that knowing God with our minds, while very helpful, is not enough. God wants us to know Him PERSONALLY with, and in, our hearts. The mind comes first of all and then the heart. It is God's will that "we might know Him the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." (John 17:3) and it was that PERSONAL heart knowledge of "God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2) which the apostle Paul longed for and prayed for in Philipians 3:10.

Children in the Bible

The Bible contains many pictures of individual children and young people from which we can learn important lessons. Last month we looked at Ishmael in Genesis 21 and discovered that God hears and answers the prayers of children. This month we look at Isaac the only son of Abraham to see what we can learn from him in our ministry to children.

In Genesis 22:2 God told Abraham to take his son Isaac to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering. Abraham obeyed and went to Moriah with Isaac and together they ascended the mountain. At the top, Abraham built an altar, put wood on it, tied Isaac and laid him upon the altar. He was about to plunge the knife into his son's breast, when the Angel of the Lord stopped him, and he offered up a ram instead of Isaac.

What an amazing act of obedience it was for Abraham to be willing to sacrifice his son and to obey the Lord, no matter how much it cost. Millions have praised him for this act of obedience. But what about Isaac? He was willing, without any resistance or complaint, to be bound and tied up and placed upon the altar, and willing for his father to kill him. Why? Because he knew that it was God's will, and he was ready to obey the Lord and submit to what his father was going to do. His obedience would cost more than his father's, because it would result in his death. In all of this, Isaac shows us that a lad or young teenager ("Naar" in

Isaac - the lad who obeyed God



Hebrew) can be obedient to the will and command of God, even if such obedience is costly.

We don't know how old Isaac was at this time. He was probably a young teenager. However, in those early days, when people lived longer, he may have been more like a child than one of to-day's teenagers, especially when we note that Abraham tied him up before laying him upon the altar. This is backed up by the use of the Hebrew word "Naar" which is translated twice as "lad". (verses 5, 12). This Hebrew word is often translated as "child" even as "a little child" as in 1 Samuel 1:22 and 2 Kings 5:14. Isaac grew up to be a godly man like his father and died at the age of 180.

The lesson we learn about children from this picture and this story is that **IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A CHILD TO KNOW THE WILL AND COMMANDS OF GOD AND TO BE OBEDIENT TO THEM.**



KEY QUESTIONS

PEOPLE ASK

QUESTION: "How should a Sunday School teacher like me, evangelize the children in my class?"

ANSWER: Remember that your prime responsibility is not just to tell Bible stories but to use your Bible stories to teach Bible truth. Your Bible story then becomes a Bible lesson. We would suggest that you build your lesson by taking the following steps one by one.

- 1) Select (or be informed about) the passage on which your story/lesson will be based.
- 2) Study the passage thoroughly asking God to show you the main or central truth which this passage teaches. It could be a truth about God, or about sin, or about Jesus Christ, or about salvation.
- 3) When you find this truth, write it down in a short simple sentence like "God is always just (fair)" or "Jesus Christ can do anything" and then write it at the top of your lesson plan. This is the truth you will teach throughout your lesson.

- 4) Write down, in your plan, the events which take place in your passage/story one by one and under each other, and then indicate in your plan several places where you could use the story to teach this truth. Weaving your teaching throughout your lesson in this way, (instead of clumping it all together at the end) makes it more effective and helps the children to understand it.
- 5) You should feel free to MENTION other truths in your lesson from the three categories listed under point 2 above (whether they are in the Bible passage or not) provided they help you teach and apply the central truth. But only mention them; don't teach them.
- 6) Be sure to APPLY your central truth in two ways. Firstly, apply it to the saved children to help them grow and secondly, apply it to the unsaved children to show them how to be saved.
- 7) Challenge the children in both groups to respond in their hearts to your teaching and to the applications of the central truth.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A BETTER TEACHER?

We all want to be better teachers. We all want to improve our teaching. The best way to do this is, firstly, to realise that teaching is governed by a number of principles, secondly, to understand each of these principles, and thirdly, to apply each principle to our own teaching in a process of self-examination.

The first principle which we studied last month is the principle of COMPREHENSION. The teacher should fully understand what he is teaching. **The second principle is the principle of CONCENTRATION.**

When teaching a Bible lesson to children, the teacher should CONCENTRATE on teaching ONE TRUTH throughout the lesson and teach it well. The more you try to teach, the less you will actually teach. It is better to teach a little and teach it well. What you can teach in one lesson is limited, and the ability of the children to understand and learn is also limited. Therefore, study the Bible passage thoroughly and find its central truth. (That's comprehension). This could be a truth about God, or about sin, or about Jesus Christ, or about salvation. Write it down in a short simple sentence, like "God is fair and always does what is right." Then teach this ONE TRUTH right through your lesson to all the children (That's concentration), and apply it to saved AND unsaved children (That's application). This results in a well organised, unified lesson. While you are teaching and applying that one central truth throughout your lesson, you should feel free to MENTION other truths, (whether they are, or are not, in the passage you are teaching)



provided they help you teach and apply the central truth. But you should only mention them. Do not try to teach them. Each of them can be taught in other lessons. Your formula should be **TMO**.

- ▶ **TEACH** one key truth and teach it well.
- ▶ **MENTION** other truths from time to time if they help you teach the central truth.
- ▶ **OMIT** other truths without feeling guilty. Their time will come. You will have the opportunity to teach them in other lessons and fit them in with those you have already taught.

Now test yourself:

- I agree with this principle and use it. I have found it helpful for my teaching and the children listen well.
- I don't agree with this principle at all. I will teach a number of truths in every lesson, and I believe I can do so.
- This is new to me, but I am willing to study it and decide whether to use it or not. I am open to change.
- Thank you for introducing this very practical principle. I am going to start using it immediately.

HELP!



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

If you need more help in understanding and implementing the principle of concentration, which tells us to teach one truth and give two applications in every Bible lesson, download our book "Principles of Teaching" on www.cefbookministry.com and read pages 60-68.

If you want to study the knowledge of God in more detail download our book "Problems of a Children's Worker and God's solution" on our website.

If you want to study the children who are portrayed in the Bible, download our book "Children, a Biblical Perspective."



I SEE IT

GOD IS JUST (FAIR)

**An ILLUSTRATION
For children**

We use stories or illustrations to help the children understand what we are teaching. Here is one to use when teaching that

“God is just (fair) and always does what is right.”

The new teacher at school wrote down a series of rules which everyone in the class should obey, and he said that if anyone broke one of those rules, he would have to punish him. One rule was “Do not steal.”

Tim was one of the boys in the class. He came from a poor home and was often hungry. One day Jonathan, one of the bigger boys in the class, came to the teacher and told him that someone had stolen his lunch. The teacher asked the class who had done this, and Tim

told him he had, because he was so hungry. The teacher told him he had broken one of the rules, and said he would have to be fair and keep his promise to punish any rule-breaker. He told him “I don’t like to do this but I must be fair and keep my word”

Just then Jonathan spoke up “Would it be alright for me to take this punishment instead of him, He is my friend and I am strong enough to take it?” The teacher said “Yes, that would be alright. Someone must be punished for breaking the rule, and if you are willing to take his place and take his punishment, that is fine.” And so Jonathan was punished instead of Tim, and afterwards Tim came to Jonathan and said “Thank you Jonathan for taking my place and my punishment.” (Jesus Christ took our place and our punishment.)

72 Years and Still Learning:

During my years of ministry with Child Evangelism Fellowship, I have learned many lessons and made many mistakes, some of which I would like to share with you each month, trusting you will find them helpful. I began my ministry teaching a Good News Club in our own home. I had no training and no experience. So, I taught the Bible lesson each week using the simplest “natural method”. I told each Bible story as vividly as I could and at the end, I made an application (usually evangelistic). God blessed these presentations. Over the years, I worked on this method and improved it. I especially tried to spread the teaching and application of the truths which were in the passage throughout the lesson and not leave them till the end.

A number of years later, I was introduced to a new method of teaching my lesson, which seemed much BETTER than the one I had been using. This method gave me six gospel points or truths which I was to find in the Bible passage, and then to weave all of them into every lesson, plus a truth for the saved children. This new method seemed BETTER and more effective than the one I had been using. So, I made a CHANGE, and I began to use it and teach it. And God did bless it. But after some time, I began to have doubts about this new method. “How could I really TEACH seven truths in one

ALWAYS AIM FOR THE BEST

relatively short lesson? I could SAY them, but could I teach them?” “How could children understand so much in such a short time (especially if it was all new to them)?” “How could I find these seven truths in every passage on which my lessons were based?” As a result, I decided to stop using this method and find a method which was closer to the principles of teaching and was relatively easy to follow.

After some time, I found a simple method which I believed, and still believe, was BETTER than the one I had been using. **FIND THE ONE MAIN TRUTH IN THE PASSAGE, WEAVE AND TEACH THAT TRUTH THROUGHOUT THE LESSON, AND APPLY IT TO BOTH GROUPS OF CHILDREN.** As a result, I CHANGED the method I used to teach my lessons to children and I CHANGED how I would help others to teach their lessons, and that includes all you dear downloaders and readers of Mini Mag.

I would conclude by encouraging you not to be afraid to CHANGE any part of your ministry to children if you have found something which is BETTER and more BIBLICAL. It took me a long time to find this method of teaching a Bible lesson, which I now use and advocate, but I am glad I did and that I made the CHANGE.

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children’s Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Administrator 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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