



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

It is God the Father's will and desire that we should "KNOW Him, the only true God, AND Jesus Christ Whom He has sent." (John 17:3). His Word tells us in 2 Peter 1:2 that the more we grow in our "knowledge of God (our Father) AND of Jesus our Lord", the more grace and peace we will experience in our lives.

We saw last month that the first step in the believer's pilgrimage to know God is to LEARN what He is like, and as He is REVEALED in HIS WORD. The more we learn about Him, and His attributes, the more we will grow in our knowledge of Him.

USE YOUR SPIRITUAL EYES AND GROW

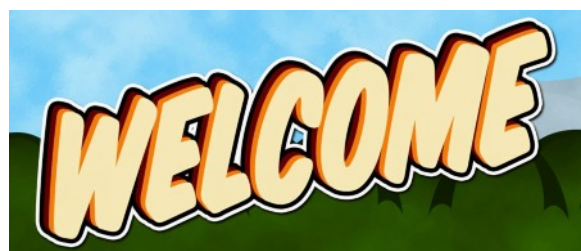
When we want to get to know our new next-door neighbours, we start by LEARNING all we can about them, and the next stage comes when we LOOK at them for the first time and see what they LOOK like.

Similarly, the second step in our pilgrimage to know God is to use our eyes and LOOK at Him. But how can we do that? The Bible tells us that God the Father is Spirit (John

4:24), and that He is invisible. (1 Timothy 1:17) and that "no-one has seen God at any time." (John 1:18) Therefore we will never see God the Father, or God the Holy Spirit. How then can we LOOK at God and SEE Him?

The wonderful answer to that question is that God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, like His Father, was Spirit from all eternity, became flesh over 2000 years ago. (John 1:14). He could be seen, and the disciples beheld His Glory and the Glory of His Father. He is the visible image of the invisible God. He told His disciples that "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9), and we read in Hebrews 1:3 that "He is the brightness of His (the Father's) glory and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON."

As we LOOK at the Lord Jesus Christ, we see God the Father. The disciples had the advantage of using their PHYSICAL EYES to do so, but we need to use our SPIRITUAL EYES. As we read the Word of God, and especially the four Gospels, we see in Jesus Christ a clear picture and image of God the Father, and what we see in God the



I appreciate special days like birthdays and anniversaries. These are days when we WELCOME our family members and friends into our home and have fellowship together. I also appreciate the first day of each month because that is the day we send you the latest issue of Mini Mag and the day when we WELCOME you to download it, read it and, we trust, receive help and encouragement for your life and ministry from it. To-day could be a special day for you. There may be something in this month's Mini Mag which will meet a need or answer a question or solve a long-seated problem. We WELCOME YOU and trust that you will be blessed as you read it.

Son with our spiritual eyes helps us to grow in our knowledge of God the Father. But it also helps us to grow in our knowledge of God the Son. The more we LOOK at God the Son the more we will get to know Him and the more we will get to know God the Father through Him.

It is the expressed desire of God the Father that we should know Him AND His Son (John 17:3), and that we should GROW in our knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10) AND in the knowledge of His Son. (2 Peter 3:18)

Children in the Bible

One of the greatest truths we have learned about God is that HE IS WISE. He has a plan, a good plan, and He uses people to fulfil that plan. In the early chapters of Exodus, God saw the sufferings of His chosen people, the Israelites, in Egypt. He had a plan to bring them out of Egypt into the land He had promised to give to them, and He chose one man to be the person He would use to fulfil that plan.

It all started when a baby, called Moses, was born to a humble Jewish couple, chosen by God. When they saw that he was a beautiful child (Exodus 2:2, Hebrews 11:23), they realised that he was the special child God had promised to give them (Hebrews 11:23). So, they determined to keep him safe from the Egyptians, who were killing all the new-born Israelite baby boys. They were able to hide him for three months in their home, but when this was no longer possible, God guided the baby's mother to create a little boat made with bulrushes, put her baby in it, and leave it in the shallows of a nearby river; and she asked her young daughter Miriam to watch over it.

The daughter of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, came to that river, and to the very place where the baby was placed, saw him, loved him and had compassion on him, and decided to take him home with her. At that moment, Miriam, who had been watching everything very carefully, spoke to the princess; "Would you like me to get a Hebrew nurse to nurse the child for you", and the princess said "Yes". So, Miriam called her mother, and the princess gave her the baby, asked her to

MOSES

- the Child Whose Future Was Determined By His Early Years



nurse him and gave her the wages for doing so. As a result, the mother of Moses was able, for a number of years, not only to nurse and look after the child's physical needs, but, more important, instruct him in the Word of God and in his great heritage. The child ("Naar" in Hebrew) was eventually brought to Pharaoh's daughter, and, in the years which followed, he was instructed in the ways of the Egyptians and became a greatly gifted leader. But at the age of forty, Moses turned his back on all that Egypt could offer, and became God's appointed leader, who would lead His people out of Egypt and into the promised land. **His mother had, by faith, in those early years laid a spiritual foundation which he never forgot and which was to determine his future service for his God.**

It is wonderful to see the wise hand of God in every detail of this story, how He directed His Plan and how He used people to fulfil that plan. He used a mother, a princess and, of course, A BABY AND A YOUNG GIRL.

WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS STORY THAT GOD CAN AND DOES USE CHILDREN TO FULFIL HIS PLANS.



KEY QUESTIONS

ASKED BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: Are little children not too young to understand the Gospel and trust Jesus Christ as Saviour?

Answer: I do not believe that ALL little children, up to the age of, say, five or six years, are able or ready to trust Jesus Christ. If they are too young (especially in the younger ages) to understand what sin is, and to be convicted of it, they are not able, or ready, to put their trust in Him, and we should never put any kind of pressure on them to do so. But there are those little children of five years or six years, or even earlier, who ARE ready and ARE able to understand all they need to be saved. Church history gives many examples. There are four statements to keep in mind in answer to this question.

- Salvation is by grace through faith and not by understanding.
- There must be, of course, some understanding before any person (including little children) can exercise and direct their faith. But we must not make that level of understanding too high or too complicated.
- We must never underestimate the capacity of a little child to see and understand things which those who are more intellectual find it difficult or impossible

to understand. Don't forget the words of the Lord Jesus when He prayed in Matthew 11:25 "I thank You Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes." (The Greek word "Brephos" means "a baby.")

- We must certainly not under-estimate the power of the Holy Spirit to illuminate, convict and regenerate. That is the main key to answering this question. Those who say that it is not possible for a child at, or below, the age of, say, five or six to be saved and regenerated could be close to denying the power and ability of the Holy Spirit to save and regenerate that child.

A follow up question asks, "What is the best age to be saved" and the best and simplest answer is "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.... THE EARLIER THE BETTER." The earlier people trust Jesus Christ, the more years they have to serve Him, and the more time for their lives and personalities to be shaped and polished. How often have we heard older Christians say "I wish that I had been saved as a child. I would not have had so many problems in My life."

Your Ministry to Children:

ORGANISATION EQUALS EFFICIENCY

Good teaching is the result of understanding, and using, the principles of teaching. We have studied three of those principles so far: COMPREHENSION, CONCENTRATION and APPLICATION. When you **understand** the passage you are teaching from, when you have found the central truth you will **concentrate** on, and you have determined how to **apply** it to the saved and unsaved children, your next step is ORGANISATION. Organised teaching is more effective and helpful than disorganised teaching.

- You need to be **ORGANISED** in your goals. You should have TWO goals. Firstly, that all children in your group be saved; and, secondly, that all saved children in your group grow spiritually. Keep to those goals.
- You need to be **ORGANISED** in your thinking. You need to have an organised view and understanding of the Gospel truths unsaved children need to be taught and see which of them you can teach in your lesson to help them know how to be saved. You need to understand the needs of saved children and be able to see if there is a truth in your lesson which will help them grow spiritually.
- You need to be **ORGANISED** in your preparation of your teaching plan. At the top of your page write the central truth you will be teaching. Then write the word "Beginning" and decide how you will start your lesson. Below that write, one by one, the "events" of your story. Then write the letters CT



to show the places where you will teach the central truth. The next step is to add the letters CTU where you will apply the central truth to the unsaved children and CTS where you will apply it to the saved children. Finally decide and write down at the bottom your closing challenge(s). It's a lot of work but it will be well worthwhile. The more you organise your teaching plan, the better you will teach.

- You need to be **ORGANISED** in your presentation of the lesson. The children understand and learn better when your teaching is organised and structured, and when it is presented in a clear logical way. Your teaching plan will help you do this, and you should follow it step by step,
- You need to **ORGANISE** your overall teaching plan over a period of time and ensure that no major truth is excluded from your teaching.

Self-examination time: Mark yourself from 1 to 10 as to how organised you are in each of the five sections.

HELP!



**ACEW
CAN
HELP
YOU!**

A number of years ago, we felt that we should write and print a book which would give the answers to the questions which are most frequently asked by those who evangelize children and minister to their spiritual needs. We selected 100 questions and endeavoured to answer each of them, basing our answers on the Word of God and our many years of experience in the evangelism and edification of children. The title of this book is *"100 Questions and Answers concerning a Ministry to Children"* and it is available to you, free of charge, on our website at www.cefbokministry.com. We believe that children's workers, pastors, evangelists and parents will find the answers they are seeking within these 200 pages.



An Illustration for children's workers

I SEE IT

**BUILD THE WALL
Eureka! AT THE TOP OF THE CLIFF**

"That the generation to come might know them (God's Word).....that they might set their hope in God.....and may not be like their fathers a stubborn and rebellious generation" (Psalm 78:6-8)

Life can be compared to a cliff with many people falling over it. At the bottom of the cliff are many broken lives and bodies –broken by sin. What a tragedy! Many Christians are working at the bottom of this cliff and are building a "spiritual hospital" where such lives can be treated and mended through the blood of Christ. They do a great but difficult work. However, there is another solution to the problem of broken lives. God calls some people to leave the bottom of the cliff and go to the top of the cliff and, instead of building a hospital there, to start building a wall to prevent people—the children—from falling over the cliff and to reach them before sin has broken their lives and bodies. Building the wall at the top of the cliff is child evangelism. Is God calling you to be a wall builder? Prevention is better than cure.



SALVATION BY FAITH

An Illustration for children

Jeff asked his Dad what it meant to be “saved by faith.” and to have all our sins forgiven. His Dad tried to explain it, but Jeff still did not understand. So, he took Jeff to a shed at the back of his house, which was dark and had no light in it, except when the door was open. Along one side of the shed was a sturdy table and he helped Jeff to get up onto it and stand on it. Then he closed the door so that the shed was in complete darkness. “Now” he said to his son “You cannot see me, but I am here. Jump

off the table and I will catch you.”. Without hesitation Jeff jumped and his father caught him in his arms.

“How could you jump, Jeff, when you couldn’t see me.?” asked his father. “Because I knew you would catch me” Jeff answered. “Yes” said his father. “You had faith in me. You trusted me to catch you.” “Now I understand it.” said Jeff “I could not see you, but I knew you would catch me and not let me fall. I can’t see the Lord Jesus, but I can trust Him and jump into His arms, and He will not let me fall. He will save me when I ask Him and put my trust in Him, and all my sins will be forgiven.”

72 Years and Still Learning:

One of the most important lessons I have learned in my ministry to children (perhaps the most important) is that the Bible, the very Word of God, must always play a central and dominant part in my teaching ministry. There must never be any substitute for the teaching of the Word of God to the children. Paul’s exhortation to “Preach the Word” in 2 Timothy 4:2 applies as much to our ministry to children as it does to a ministry to adults, even if the way it is preached is different.

I remember when I, as a young inexperienced children’s evangelist, focussed my teaching of the Bible lesson on stories like the story of the hen which died in the forest fire but her little chicks were safe under her wings, along with references to and quotes from the Bible. The stories were good and helpful and the children loved them. But I was convicted that my teaching should be completely centred and focussed on the Word of God, and that such stories should be used more briefly and as illustrations. And, from then onwards, I sought to be a “preacher of God’s Word” to the children. Why did I make this change?

■ **Because I was convinced that the Bible is the VERY WORD OF GOD, and I wanted the children to hear what He was actually saying to them.**

PREACH THE WORD (2 Timothy 4:2)

■ **Because the Word of God is POWERFUL when it is taught. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD.” (Romans 10:17) It is the Word of God which brings salvation to the unsaved children (1 Peter 1:23) and spiritual growth to the saved children (John 17:17). We have spiritual dynamite in our hands. (Romans 1:16) and the more we teach it the more effective will be our ministry to the children.**

■ **Because GOD COMMANDS us to teach His Word. (Matthew 28:19,20)**

■ **Because GOD PROMISES to bless His Word. (Isaiah 55:10,11)**

We must never substitute ANYTHING for the teaching of the Word of God in our ministry to the children. However, we have a responsibility to teach it SIMPLY, ATTRACTIVELY, SYSTEMATICALLY, AND PRACTICALLY. We must not be like those who have introduced more and more things to make their teaching “attractive” and, in doing so, have reduced their direct teaching of the Scriptures. The Word of God, if properly taught is not only attractive, but God, in His Word, tells us that “it shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

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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