



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

How can you get to know your new next door neighbour? **LEARN** all you can about him, even before he comes. **LOOK** carefully at him when he does come. **LISTEN** to him as he speaks to you and **SPEAK** to him often. Your friendship is growing and now as you **LIVE** beside him, and see him every day, you will have fellowship with him, and really get to know him. We, however, are on a pilgrimage to **KNOW GOD** and so we are following the same four steps.....

We LEARN about Him and His attributes in the Bible.

We LOOK at Jesus Christ in the Bible. He is the express image of our invisible God.

We LISTEN to God as we read His Word, and **WE SPEAK** to Him in our Quiet Time. And.....

We LIVE with Him in fellowship and communion. John wrote in 1 John 1:3b "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

**DRAW NEAR TO GOD
AND HE WILL
DRAW NEAR
TO YOU (James 4:8)**

What an amazing statement! We can have fellowship and communion with the God Who created the universe and with His Son Jesus Christ. And the more fellowship we have with both Father and Son, the more we will truly know both of Them.

God is always present with us, but there are special times when we

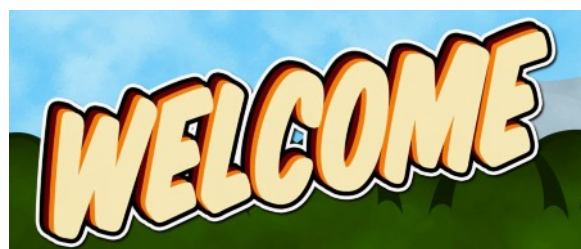
can enter into the very presence of God, especially in our daily Quiet Times, when "we draw near to God (and He promises that) He will draw near to us" (James 4:8). These are very special times, times of fellowship and communion, and times when we get to know our Father and His Son better. We make it our goal to take time to be with God, to be still in His presence and to express our **LOVE** to Him. We don't only **LIVE** and fellowship with God, **WE LOVE** Him. and we find that our intimacy with Him, our communion with Him and our knowledge of Him grows.

But in our pilgrimage to know God we can also enjoy His presence and His fellowship **AT ANY TIME**.

We are always on speaking terms with the God of the universe. When problems come and difficulties arise we can whisper "Help me Lord."

When good things happen, and we see prayers answered we can whisper "Thank you Lord."

When we go to bed at night and just before going to sleep, we can thank Him for a good day, commit ourselves to Him and then say,



A hearty welcome to all to this 30th issue of Mini Mag. We trust you will find it easy and interesting to read and that it will be helpful for your life and ministry to children. We would like, this month, to suggest a project which could be of great help to you in the future:

- 1) Download all thirty issues of Mini Mag using both sides of each page.
- 2) Assemble them together and in order.
- 3) Punch holes in each of them and put them all in a strong file.

You have now got an attractive 60-page Maxi Mag which you would find easy to consult and read. You could also systemically follow through month-by-month subjects like "Knowing God" "Understanding Children," "Teaching Children" and "History of Children's Evangelism." **AND ALL FREE OF CHARGE.**

"Good night Lord Jesus" and "Good night Heavenly Father". That's not childish. That's fellowship.

Getting to know God is a gradual and a life-long process which requires patience, and, above all, sincerity and devotion. There is no quick once for all solution. None of us, including the writer, will ever know God the way we should, while here on earth. But it is vital that we really want to know God, that we are hungry for that knowledge, and that we are moving in the right direction. ONWARDS AND UPWARDS.

Children in the Bible

We all know the wonderful story in First Samuel of David and his defeat of the giant Goliath. But it is essential that we understand that his victory was only possible because of his great TRUST in his great God, and his assurance that God “would give Goliath into his hands.” (17:47) He trusted God to do what he, on his own, could not do. What an example for our children and young people to-day as they seek to overcome the difficulties they face in to-day’s world. What an assurance that they can be victorious as David was when they put their trust in an unchangeable God.

It is estimated by most Bible scholars that David was in his mid or late teens when he defeated the giant. But I wonder if he could have been even younger, say 12 or 13 years old, for the following reasons:

Samuel thought that God would choose an older brother, rather than the youngest of the eight brothers (16:12)

Eliab, his eldest brother, mocked him and told him to leave the battlefield and go home. (17:28)

Saul felt he should not fight Goliath because he was a youth (“Naar” often translated as “child.”) (17:33)

Goliath laughed at David and saw him as a red-cheeked good-looking youth (“Naar”). (17:42)

All of these reactions could possibly have described a healthy lad about 12 or 13 years old.

But this display of a teenager’s trust in God did not start with his victory over Goliath:

DAVID

- the boy who trusted God In every situation



David writes many years later, that he had trusted God when he was young. “You are my hope O Lord God. You are my trust from my youth” (Psalm 71:5) and “Oh God You have taught me from my youth.” (71:17) The Hebrew word “Neumin” used in both verses is usually translated “youth”, but it was also used by Samuel to refer back to the time he started to walk with God and it is translated “childhood.” (1 Samuel 12:2) His youthful or childlike trust was also displayed by the way he trusted God to guard him and the animals he was tending from other animals. (17:37) David trusted God in his defeat of Goliath, but every indication is that this display of trust was based upon his experiences with God and his trust in Him when he was younger –perhaps quite a bit younger.

AS WE LOOK AT DAVID, WE CAN SEE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN CAN REALLY TRUST GOD WHEN THEY ARE FACED WITH PROBLEMS.



KEY QUESTIONS

PEOPLE ASK

Question: Is making a decision for Christ a genuine salvation experience for a child, or is it just one of many steps leading to a more mature understanding which will, in turn, lead to true conversion at a later age?

Answer: The answer to this question depends primarily on that initial “decision for Christ.” If it was the work of the Holy Spirit convicting, helping to understand, granting saving faith and regenerating—then it was a genuine salvation experience, no matter how young the child was. This experience does not need to be repeated. It is not a step leading to a true conversion experience at a later date. It is a true conversion experience itself. But saved children need to grow spiritually, and there could be times (short or long) in that sanctifying process when they backslide, or lack assurance, but that does not nullify his original salvation experience if it was genuine. Later decisions could be made when older which are not salvation decisions but steps in the process of sanctification.

If the “decision was “just a decision,” a human and fleshly decision made under pressure of some kind, the situation is completely different. Such decisions are not the work of the Holy Spirit but rather the result of an

over enthusiastic type of evangelism. These children still need to be saved, and the tragedy is that they think they are saved, and they could be more difficult to reach with the gospel and come to a true saving-knowledge of Jesus Christ. We need to be careful when we evangelise children. They are so open, so interested, and so easy to influence. It is easy to put pressure on a child that will result in his making a decision which is our work and not the work of the Holy Spirit, and such a “decision” could be spiritually damaging for him.

Question: How do we know if that decision made by the child was genuine or not?

Answer: We cannot be completely sure. Only God knows the answer. We accept the child’s profession of faith as genuine (provided it was not made under pressure of any kind) and seek to help him grow spiritually. When we see evidences of salvation in his life at a later date, we will be encouraged to believe that his decision was genuine. But only God knows the sure answer to this question.

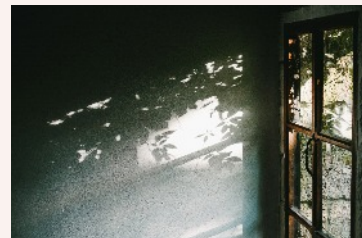
THE IMPORTANT FACT IS NOT TO KNOW WHEN CHILDREN ARE REGENERATED BUT TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE.

Your Ministry to Children:

In our last issue of Mini Mag we saw how important it is to follow the principle of EXPLANATION when teaching your Bible lesson to the children. We learned that saying or stating a truth is not enough. You need to explain it so the children can understand it and that takes time. But it is better to teach less and teach it better. Several of the other teaching principles will help you to EXPLAIN what you are teaching. We studied one of these, the principle of VISUALISATION, back in issues 17, 18, and 19. Using visual aids, like flashcards or flannelgraph, can help you explain what you are teaching, and make it more effective. The principle of ILLUSTRATION, which we are studying this month, can also be a great help in your explanation of a truth. The Latin word "lustrare" means to "light up." Illustrations are like windows. They let the light in and let the children see and understand what you are teaching.

The use of illustrations was a basic part of the teaching ministry of the Lord Jesus. The parables or STORIES which He told, like the Prodigal Son, were windows through which the light entered the minds of His disciples. He also used OBJECTS like lilies, birds and seeds, which were familiar to His listeners, to illustrate what He was teaching and help them to understand it. You should follow His example and use carefully chosen illustrations, whether they be stories or objects, to light up and explain what you are teaching.

LET THE LIGHT IN



The main type of illustration you could use is a short relevant STORY which is interesting, and which clearly illustrates the truth you are teaching. It is hard work to gather such illustrations. But you can find good stories in the Bible which you could use as illustrations. Or you could use stories from other books, or stories which you have heard others use. You could also use OBJECTS to illustrate what you are teaching. You could use a mirror to illustrate how the Bible is a mirror which shows us what we are really like, or you could compare a dead helpless glove with no hand in it and a glove with your hand in it, to illustrate the difference the Holy Spirit and His power can make in a child's life.

You could download the book of illustrations which we have printed at

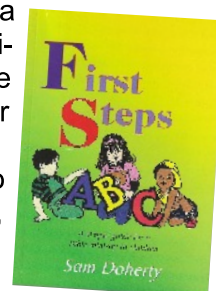
www.cefbookministry.com entitled "Now I See It". It contains over 550 illustrations which we collected from different sources and we have put them along with the truths they illustrate. We are also including one good illustration in each issue of Mini Mag. You can of course produce your own illustrations, but, if you do, make sure they are short. You should never use more than two or three short illustrations in each lesson. Also make sure that they actually do illustrate what you are teaching.



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

We have written and published a book entitled "First Steps" which could be of great help to those who are starting a ministry to children and do not have much experience or training. It could also help those who are more experienced, by finding in it, some ways or ideas which could help their ministry.

In many ways it is a "starter kit". We have tried to keep it as simple and as practical as possible, and it covers every aspect of a ministry to children in a helpful and understandable way. In its 250 pages you will find all you need to know and do as you begin and as you develop your ministry to the boys and girls. It's a book which I personally would dearly liked to have had when I started my ministry to children many years ago. It is available to you free of charge on our website at www.cefbookministry.com





JESUS CHRIST WANTS TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND SAVE YOU

An Illustration for children

Do any of you like painting pictures? Are they good? Have you ever seen any really famous paintings? One of the most famous in the world was painted by a man called Holman Hunt. It is a picture of Jesus Christ standing at a door which is firmly shut and His right hand is on the knocker. In His left hand He has a lantern which shows the nail prints in His hand. The weeds have grown around the door which has not been opened for

many years. This door is a picture of the human heart which is closed to the Lord Jesus, He is knocking at it and He wants to enter. When Holman Hunt first painted this picture people criticised him for leaving out the handle on the door. But he replied "There is a handle but it is on the inside. This door opens only from the inside", This is also true of your heart and life. The Lord Jesus is knocking and wants to come into your life, but the handle is on the inside. The decision is yours. Open the door of your life to Him.

72 Years and Still Learning:

THE GREATEST LESSON I HAVE LEARNED

The greatest truth I have ever learned is that Jesus Christ died for me and for my sins, and that, trusting Him I have a complete and eternal salvation. My understanding of this truth and my response to it occurred in November 1949 and I have been rejoicing in it ever since. During the first thirty years of my Christian life and service I had always believed in the sovereignty of God, but I see now that I had believed this truth in a qualified sense and not in an absolute sense. But in the late 1970s God initiated a process in my life which was to lead me to an absolute, complete and very practical belief in His sovereignty. THIS was the truth which would change my life and change my service. I doubt if I could have continued in my ministry without my belief in this great truth.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We read in His Word the truth that God is sovereign. "Yours is the Kingdom O Lord and You are exalted as Head over ALL Both riches and honour come from You and You reign over ALL. In Your hand is power and might. In Your hand it is to make great, and to give strength to ALL" (1 Chron 29 11,12). "He does according to His will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand." (Daniel 4:35) "Whatever the Lord pleases He does in Heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places." (Psalm 135:6)

We learn from His Word the meaning of God's sovereignty. "That God is in complete control over everything, every person and every circumstance." "That nothing happens unless God causes it or allows it. Nothing is excluded." "That God is sovereign in creation, in providence (or control) and redemption." "That God has a plan for the world towards which He is working and nothing or no one can stop Him." "That nothing happens to us as believers unless God SENT IT, as He sent the storm and great fish into Jonah's life, or unless He ALLOWS IT as He allowed Satan to attack Job."

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF A GOD-GIVEN BELIEF IN THIS TRUTH?

We will TRUST God completely to meet every need in our lives and ministries. He is in CONTROL.

We will have complete PEACE about every circumstance, good or bad, with no complaints.

We will have CONFIDENCE in our evangelism knowing that He will accomplish His purposes in their hearts.

We will THANK Him for all He is doing even if we don't understand it.

Above all, we will WORSHIP HIM OUR SOVEREIGN GOD.

**TRUST....PEACE....CONFIDENCE....
THANKSGIVING....WORSHIP**

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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