



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

STEP 1 GOD CHOSE AND PREDESTINED US. The first step in God's great plan for mankind took place in ETERNITY past, and away back before there even was a world. That first step was a DECISION which God made concerning us. He chose and predestined us to be saved and to become like His Son Jesus Christ. The second step in God's plan is an ACT which God performed in TIME and in our lives; an act which would fulfil, in TIME, what He had decided in ETERNITY.

STEP 2 THE HOLY SPIRIT REGENERATED US. The Holy Spirit convicted us of sin and enabled us to put our trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. At that moment, A GREAT CHANGE occurred in our lives. At the moment of regeneration, a clear, definite and supernatural change is

made in the sinner by God. We were born again by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-8) We became new people with a new nature. (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is not necessary to know the exact moment

REGENERATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT -TO BE LIKE JESUS CHRIST

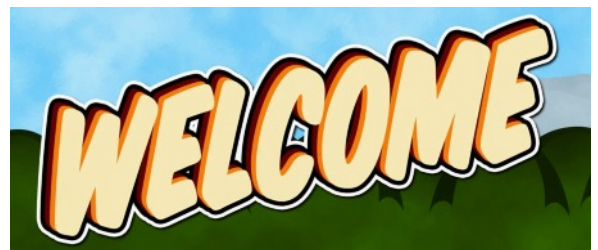
when that regeneration took place in your life (although most believers do). But it is necessary to know that it did take place.

Paul in Ephesians 4:24 and in Colossians 3:9,10 uses the picture of changing clothes to illustrate the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration in us.

At conversion, and in response to the work of the Holy Spirit, we took the initial step, in repentance and faith, to put off the old man, the old way of life, as we would take off clothes. (Colossians 3:9)

#At conversion, and in response to the work of the Holy Spirit, we put on the new man, the new self, the new way of life, the new nature, as we would put on clothes. (Colossians 3:10) Paul writes in Ephesians 4:24 that the new man is righteous and holy. And he writes in Colossians 3:10 that the new man is the image of Jesus Christ. The new man or image of Jesus Christ is formed in the believer at the moment of regeneration.

This, then is the start of the process of sanctification which makes us more and more like Jesus Christ. The regenerated person is far from perfect. He is not what he should be; he is not what he would like to be; but he is not what he used to be. He is different from what he was!



Do you ever feel hungry? Of course, you do. We all do –frequently. What do we want and need when we are hungry? We want and need food. I remember that, when I was a very inexperienced children's evangelist, I was hungry for help, for ideas, for advice, and for teaching. When I had the opportunity to receive any of these, I eagerly took hold of them and absorbed as much as I could from them and was greatly helped and strengthened by them.

When we produce Mini Mag we are especially thinking of inexperienced children's workers who are hungry for help along the lines of the help we received from others in the past. We trust that we are helping you. And we also want to help those workers who have been in the ministry for years and are more experienced. You may not be hungry in the above sense, but we trust that a "good meal" would still be welcome. So, WE WELCOME ALL OUR READERS AND DOWNLOADERS, and we trust that this issue of Mini Mag and the 32 preceding issues will provide a good spiritual meal.

Regeneration is the first of the two major experiences in the life of every Christian. Many believers do not realise the magnitude of what took place when we trusted Christ. The new birth is a miracle-- a truly cataclysmic change in a person's life –and a vital part in God's plan for humanity. Glorification is the second major experience for every Christian. Sanctification, then, is the process in our lives between these two major experiences.

Children in the Bible

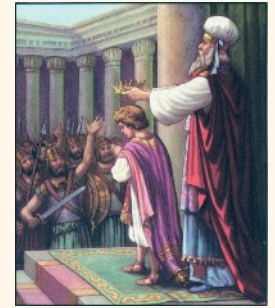
There is no doubt that Josiah was a child. The Bible describes him as eight years old (2 Chronicles 34:1). It tells us that he became king of Judah at that age when his evil father Amon was murdered—and that he would reign for 31 years. We read in 2 Chron. 34:2 that he did what was right in the sight of the Lord. So he must have had some understanding of God's statutes and obeyed them. We also read that he walked in the godly ways of David and that he never deviated to the right or to the left. He was steadfast. What a testimony for an eight year old whose father was an evil man, and who lived in an evil environment where the people around him worshipped idols and did other wicked things.

This shows us that **IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A YOUNG CHILD TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR GOD DESPITE UNGODLY PARENTS AND EVIL CIRCUMSTANCES.** It also shows us that God can keep and help a believing child in the midst of sin and wickedness. It is also probable that his grandfather Manasseh, who had been an evil king, but had come back to God (2 Chron 33:13), had a good influence on him for the early years of his life.

We read in 2 Chronicles 34:3 that Josiah, at the age of sixteen, "began to seek the God of his father David". He longed for a deeper knowledge of God at that age. Then four years later, at the age of twenty, this chapter tells us that he tore down all the heathen altars and destroyed all the idols the people were worshipping. When he was 26

JOSIAH

- the child who did what was right



years old (2 Chron. 34:8) he decided to repair and restore the Temple of God. This was a massive work and when it was in progress, the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord. When the Book of the Law of the Lord was read to Josiah, he called all the people together and read the Word of God to them and, as a result, he and all the people pledged themselves to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.(2 Chron. 34:32,33) Then, in chapter five, we read that Josiah and all his people celebrated the Passover in that same year.

And this revival all started with a child of eight WHO DID WHAT WAS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD all his life and the result was that both he and his people were greatly blessed by God.

Isn't this story a great encouragement to all of us who work with children? Who knows what God is going to do with those eight year olds in your class, if you faithfully minister to them.



KEY QUESTIONS

PEOPLE ASK

Question: You recommend that we teach doctrine to children (even young children). How can we do this? How can children understand doctrine?

Answer: First of all, we need to understand what is meant by the word "doctrine." It is not a word to cause us to be frightened. It is something to be welcomed not avoided. The Greek word used so often in the New Testament means "the act of teaching"; but in the Bible it is used to mean "the teaching of a truth or truths". So, if you are teaching a Bible truth such as "There is a God" or "Everyone is a sinner" or "Jesus Christ saves sinners" or "The Bible is God's Word and completely true" or "The Holy Spirit lives in believers"—you are teaching doctrine. And even younger children could understand these doctrines or truths if they are taught in an understandable way.

Secondly, we need to realise how important it is for children to understand and believe doctrines such as these. Doctrine is the basis of what children are (their character) and of what they do (their actions). Therefore, the teaching of doctrine must be the basis of our ministry to the children. The Lord Jesus told His disciples "to teach them ALL things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20) and Paul's command to Titus to preach "sound doctrine" (Titus 1: 9 and 2:1) should surely apply to our ministry to the children.

How can we therefore teach doctrine or truth to the children? There are at least two ways we can do so.

1) By using every Bible lesson to teach and apply ONE TRUTH. Study the Bible passage on which your lesson is based carefully and prayerfully until you find the main truth taught in that passage. Then weave the teaching of that truth right through your lesson. You can, of course, mention and include other truths which help you teach and apply your main truth. But your main goal is that the children will understand this one central truth and see how it applies to them. Other truths will be, or have been, taught in other lessons.

2) By selecting the truth you wish to teach such as "Jesus Christ gives us eternal life." Then think through and write down all you would like to teach to explain and apply this truth. Now organise what you have written in eight short logical sentences. Print each sentence onto a flashcard. You can add a picture to each flashcard which fits in with the sentence, but this is difficult and not necessary. On a ninth flashcard print an initial question which is answered logically in the other eight flashcards. The result could be as follows: 1) Is it possible to live for ever? 2) We are all sinners. 3) The result of sin is death. 4) Your body will die one day. 5) Jesus Christ died for your sin. 6) Trust Him, your sins will be forgiven. 7) The "real you" will never die. 8) Your body will be raised again. 9) The "complete you" will live for ever. You could include little stories or illustrations here and there to help keep the children's attention.

Your Ministry to Children:

HOW ARE YOUR PRINCIPLES?

Good teaching is based upon the understanding and putting into practice of the principles of teaching. A "principle" is defined as "the right way to do something" and these principles, which we have studied over the last few months, have shown us the right way to teach our children. We pray and trust that the Holy Spirit will help the children to learn and to respond to our teaching, but He expects us to be as efficient and effective in our teaching as possible. We have studied 11 teaching principles in recent issues of Mini Mag and I thought it would be good, this month, to list and display them, each with questions to help us assess our teaching.

YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT

PRINCIPLE (with the number of the issue in which it was studied.)

ATTRACTION (13-15)

Think back to a teacher you had as a child. Was he/she attractive? What made him/her and their teaching attractive? How would you rate your own attractiveness on a scale of 1 to 10?

COMMUNICATION (16)

List some of the words you have used in your ministry which you now realise you should not have used. What words should you have used in their place?

VISUALISATION (17-20)

What type of visualisation have you decided to use more than before? Why? Which type would you recommend to a new teacher? Which would you not recommend?

COMPREHENSION (25)

How would you rate your understanding of Bible doctrines on a scale of 1 to 10? How would you explain the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of adoption to your children?

CONCENTRATION (26)

Have you ever been guilty of trying to teach too much in a lesson? Have you changed your teaching method since then? Why? How?



APPLICATION (27)

How would you apply these four truths to saved and unsaved children? God is holy. Jesus Christ is God. The Holy Spirit lives in believers. Everyone is a sinner and needs to be saved

ORGANISATION (28)

Do you always use and follow a written teaching plan of your lesson when teaching it? Why? Why not? Should it be visible to the children? Where would you keep it when teaching?

EXPLANATION (29)

Have you taught Bible doctrines to your children? How did you do it? How did the children react? What lessons have you learned which will help you do this more effectively?

ILLUSTRATION (30)

Write or make up an illustration which would help the children to understand that God sometimes allows difficulties to come into your life to help you to grow spiritually.

REPETITION (31)

Could you give an example of a truth you would teach in a Good News Club along with the Bible passage used, Bible verse, a chorus and a missionary story, all teaching the same truth.

PARTICIPATION (32)

Do you encourage participation in your meetings? Why? How? Why not? What have you determined to do to include, develop or strengthen this principle in your teaching?

HOW WELL DO YOU UNDERSTAND THESE PRINCIPLES? WHAT PART HAVE THEY PLAYED IN YOUR TEACHING? WHICH ONES DO YOU NEED TO INCLUDE OR STRENGTHEN IN THE FUTURE?

HELP!



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

We in ACEW have written and printed a number of flashcard series to help you teach doctrine to children in the way outlined above. The flashcards are large enough to be seen clearly by a group of up to 50 children and there are pictures on each flashcard to help explain the printed sentences. The

most popular of these series are "Who is God?", "What is God like?", "Salvation the Gift of God" Parts 1 and 2 and "Growth the Plan of God" Parts 1 and 2. All have 10 lessons each. These lessons are also available as PowerPoint presentations. All these series are available to you, free of charge, on our website.

www.cefbokministry.com.

We have also written and published a 195-page training manual entitled "How To Teach Bible Doctrine to Children" which covers every detail of this subject in a very helpful way. It is also available to you, free of charge on our website. Many have found it a great help to their ministry.



I SEE IT

THERE'S ONLY ONE SAVIOUR

A little boy in Africa fell into a deep pit and could not get out. Night was coming, and he could hear the howls of wild beasts. He trembled with fear. People gathered around the top of the pit. One told him he was a very foolish boy to have fallen into the pit. Another told him to get out the same way he had got in (which he could not do). Someone else told him to be more careful in the future. One person threw a blanket down to him and advised him to lie down and sleep. None of these things were of any help to him. But, then, a very strong kind man cried "Don't be afraid" and threw one end of a rope into the pit and told the boy to wrap it around himself. Then he pulled hard using his great strength and lifted the boy out of the pit. That was the real answer to the boy's need. He could not save himself. Those who stood around could not save him. He needed someone who was kind, loving and strong and who was willing to do what no-one else would or could do. There is only one kind, loving, strong Person Who can save you from your sin; and He is ready and willing to do so if you ask Him. His name is Jesus Christ.

72 Years and Still Learning:

Personal Advice from the Author:

SALVATION ALWAYS BRINGS A NEW DIRECTION

One of the most important lessons I learned in the early days of my Christian life and in my ministry was that when a person, young or old, becomes a Christian there should always be a change of direction in his/her life. Children who trust Christ will not be perfect-far from it; but they will somehow be different. The change(s) may come slowly and take time to develop. But they WILL come. If they have truly trusted Christ, the process of change and discipleship will have begun, even in some little way. They are now "new creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and our responsibility will then be to help them grow in grace.

Therefore, we should teach our children that, if they trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, they will start a new (and good) life of following and obeying the Lord Jesus; and that God will expect to see a change in their lives. If they are not

willing for this change of life and direction, they are not ready to trust Christ. There are two dangers to avoid in our evangelism. One danger is that we do not tell the children about the change God will expect to see in their lives if they trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and that He will expect their obedience. The other danger is that we make it difficult for them to respond by laying too much emphasis upon what God expects of them if they do respond. We need to be **BALANCED** in our evangelism. We don't want to make coming to Christ too easy; but we don't want to make it too hard or too difficult. The children should be made aware of the great results and joys of salvation, but they should also be encouraged to think carefully about their step of trusting Christ and be fully aware of what it will mean for them if they do so.

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.