

# DIRECTIONS

NEWSLETTER FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS



## A Worthy RETURN

Heather is nine years old. She lives with her mother and grandmother. Her mother has been diagnosed as *Paranoid-schizophrenic* and *Manic-depressive* and is a habitual drug user. Heather's mother has had many boyfriends. Some nights Heather's mother does not come home. Heather has called 911 when her mother pushed her grandmother to the ground. Heather has seen her mother taken away by the police and the health officials when she got too violent. Heather has heard her mother threaten to go "underground" with her so that no one will ever find them. Heather watches her grandmother suffer from emphysema and heart disease. Her grandmother has been very aware of Heather's need to go to church but could not always take her. What kind of childhood memories will Heather have? What kind of future does Heather hope for? How much would you invest to help Heather learn about God's love for her? Would there be any return on your investment?

Donna and Karl are in their sixties. They are both retired and take care of Donna's father. Donna and Karl invest their time in Heather. They pick her up every Sunday that she goes to church. Sometimes one of Heather's friends will accompany them.

One Sunday, Stacy, a friend of Heather's, went to church with them. The Sunday school teacher told Stacy that if she memorized a scripture verse for the next week she would get a prize. She learned the memory verse and picked a yo-yo out of the prize box. Stacy often spends the night with Heather just to go to church. Heather and her friends are learning what God's Word says. They experience the security of a loving church body. They are seeing Jesus' love modeled in others. They are learning they have a hope for their future.

Donna and Karl have invested a lot of time and energy in children over the years. They have shuttled children to church, they have taught Sunday school and they have been spiritual mentors for those children while they were growing up. What was the return on their investment? What if they had not made that investment?

Patti was also shuttled to church twenty-some years ago by Donna and Karl. She sat in Sunday school classes taught by Donna and Karl. She was mentored by them as she was growing up. She received her first Bible by learning scripture verses. Patti saw the love of God modeled in others. She saw the church as caring people. She saw a hope for her future. What was the return on that investment? You decide.

Patti Wulfestieg  
National Department of Christian Education



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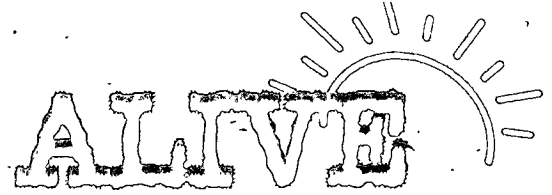
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# HOW TO MAKE BIBLE STORIES COME



Jesus is considered the master teacher. He made truth come alive. The teacher who wants to communicate biblical truth must also make truth come alive in ways that children will long remember. Here are some tips:

## 1. Prepare and Practice Your Story

- Focus on the story's main point.
- Outline the story, identifying the major events.
- Review the story so that each point in your outline will remind you of the details involved in that event.
- Practice telling the story aloud using your outline to prompt you from one main point to the next.

## 2. Have Confidence in Your Story

Why is this story worth hearing? What is the most interesting thing about this story? What are the features of this story that compel attention? A few moments spent answering these questions can help you build confidence in the value and the appeal of your story.

## 3. Capture Interest at the Start

Ask a question about something you know your children have seen or done. For example, to introduce the story of the wise men who followed the star, ask children about the longest journey they ever took. Or, invite them to tell about a favorite present they received. Share a personal experience to give children some insights into your life.

## 4. Keep Your Story Brief

A good rule of thumb for a beginning teacher is to limit your story to one minute for each year of the children's age. Thus, keep a story for six-year-olds to within six minutes. Eleven minutes is a good length for eleven-year-olds. If you have more than one age level in your class, target for the middle of the group, but be ready to shorten the story if the younger ones become restless. While an experienced storyteller may be able to stretch children's attention beyond these limits, it is always better to quit talking before the child quits listening.

## 5. Plan Your Story Sequence

Every story has five essential ingredients, each of which is needed in order for the story to make sense to children and enable them to remember what they have heard. Keep these parts in mind while preparing and presenting:

- **Setting**-Where did the story take place?
- **Character**-Who is the main person?
- **Event**-What happened to the character.
- **Action**-What does the main person do in response to the event?
- **Result**-What was the result of the character's action?

## 6. Use Communicating Skills

- Talk a little slower—or faster—to make parts of the story more dramatic.
- When the suspense builds, talk softer. A whisper is the most dramatic sound the human voice can make.
- Avoid talking down to the children. Talk to them as you would to a friend. Use words your listeners understand.

### Your face:

- Smile as you talk, especially if you are intense.
- Match your expression to the emotion of a character in the story.
- Maintain eye contact throughout the story. Know your story well enough that you only glance at your notes.

### Your presentation:

- Use puppets to tell the story.
- Let the class act out the story.
- Provide props and costumes.
- Film or videotape the performance, then view the finished production.
- Invite a guest to portray the main character. Have children primed to ask the guest questions about the story.

## 7. Involve Your Group In Discovery

The purpose of telling Bible stories to children is to lead them to understand and apply Bible truth. Include opportunity for children to use their Bibles either before, during or after the story presentation.

• In small group settings, even first graders can be led to locate the passage where the story is found. Children can quickly locate most books from which their stories are drawn by using the contents page.

• After locating a passage, even beginning readers need to be able to read something the Bible says. Ask the child to find some specific piece of information in the verse: a person's name, a word, a phrase, an answer to a question. Often the child who claims to already know the story will be surprised with something he or she read in the Bible. Many know the story of Daniel in the lion's den? But who knows what the king did during the night Daniel was with the lions, or what he shouted into the lion's den the next morning?

• One of the best ways of checking on a child's understanding is to ask, "Can you think of another way to say that?" Or ask, "How would you explain that verse to a friend?"

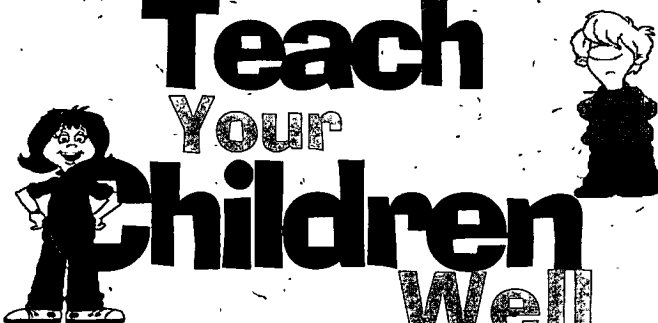
## 8. Ask Questions

Along with helping children develop their ability to use the Bible, the storyteller also needs to ask good questions. A basic type of question is one that asks for **information** or facts. The next type of question asks for evidence of **comprehension** or understanding. Try asking children to rephrase an answer or add something to what another child said. Ask "Why?"

The third type of question focuses on **application**. Ask "When have you ever done something (kind, honest, worshipful, etc.) like the person in our story?"

The teacher who leads children in answering application questions will see their interest grow as the Holy Spirit uses stories to push them on to new growth in their Christian lives.

# Teach Your Children Well



Children are exposed to many non-Christian messages in today's media. Often, new age or occult related doctrines are mixed in with biblical truths. We need to take opportunities to teach children to discern truth from worldly views. Below are a few examples taken from the article *Transforming Popular Culture*, which appeared in the September/October 1995 issue of *Children's Ministry* magazine. We have also included some insights of our own.

## The Lion King

Verse: 2 Timothy 1:7

In the fairy tale, Simba didn't know God and sought guidance from the clouded vision provided by Rafiki, the witch doctor. Simba needed help in overcoming his fear. We seek guidance from our loving Heavenly Father to overcome our fears.

## Hunchback of Notre Dame

Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7

God considers the person's heart not the outward appearance.

## Pocahontas

Verses: Psalm 19:1; Genesis 1

Contrary to the message of the Disney film, animals and things do not have a spirit. God created nature to show His love and care and He appointed people to be caretakers of this creation.

## Sleeping Beauty

Verse: Ephesians 6:17

Using the sword of truth to defeat evil.

## Aladdin

Verse: Ephesians 4:25; Proverbs 19:5

It never pays to lie.

## Blank Check

Verse: Proverbs 23:4-5

Do not focus on gaining wealth. It is soon gone.

## Toy Story

Verse: Romans 12:21

Jealously must be put aside, we must work together to overcome evil.

## Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Verse: Ephesians 6:13-18

Take on the WHOLE armor of God (including prayer) that you may defeat your enemy.

## 101 Dalmations

Verse: James 4:2

Covetousness is not pretty. (Cruella's last name is spelled DeVil-devil)

## Babe

Verse: Philippians 4:12,13

People may not always believe we can do something, but God believes in us and will give us opportunities to succeed.

## Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

Verse: Romans 12:21

The Power Rangers constantly face evil forces bent on destroying the earth. To overcome the monsters, each Power Ranger must join together to create a Megazord—a powerful robot. Each Power Ranger bands together with the others to form one body to defeat evil.

## Batman

Verse: Galations 6:9

Gotham takes on a dark, gloomy look as evil begins to run the city. Batman sees the tricks of the enemy and doesn't get discouraged by his environment. He overcomes the evil.

## Targeting Ministries

Before you start a new ministry, ask yourself:

What do children do outside of school hours in my community?

How can we do it better and include the good news?

What are the most pressing needs of families with young children in our area?

How can we help meet those needs and show God's love for children at the same time?

How can we help children serve others and grow in their faith?

What special facilities and resources has God given our congregation? How can these be used to help children in our community?

Used with permission. Taken from "Targeting Ministries." *Children's Ministry Newsletter* Vol. 1, No. 3 Fall 1996.

# What Do We Do With The Children?

There is constant debate over whether children should be part of the adult church service with their parents, or attend classes that have activities based on their age groups. Presented below are two opposing views. Keep in mind that a topic for further discussion (perhaps in a future Directions) would be—children who attend church without their parents.

## *Get Thee to a Children's Church*

In my 20 years as a children's church helper and leader, I've experienced very few valid "family" worship services. Children sit, stand, squirm, draw pictures, and fold offering envelopes.

Granted, if there were such a thing as a family service, one that appealed and ministered to all ages, I'd be the first to applaud intergenerational worship. But chances are "intergenerational" translates into ADULT. Here's why children should go to children's church:

**The Bible was never meant to be boring.** God's Word is the most exciting book ever authored. We must constantly present God's Word in such a way as to excite children about its content and its application to everyday living.

**Children aren't made to sit.** Scripture says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." We have been training generations of children in the way adults go—to sit on a pew and be quiet.

Children's church provides constant ministry involvement and training as a child matures through the elementary years. The child who learns to take part as a worship leader, storyteller, actor, or object lesson assistant will grow up to be a Sunday school teacher, children's church leader, or even a pastor.

**God's love isn't complicated.** It's our duty as children's ministers to bring the love of God to each child in unique and understandable ways. The typical four-point homily often shoots over adult's heads. Most children find it nearly impossible to discern the relevance of an adult sermon. Children's church offers an opportunity to present a simple theme.

**God isn't supposed to be difficult to find.** One Sunday, eight children, ages 9 to 12, committed their lives to Jesus. These children heard the gospel presented on their level. They responded to a message where hefty theological terminology was discarded—and this happened in a children's church.

Send your children to children's church. Take the first step toward blessing each child by providing a valid worship service where every child can take part, understand, and receive from God.

Dick Gruber is a Children's Pastor and author of the book *Children's Church Circus or Service?* Gospel Publishing House

## *Keep Families Together*

The Bible has a lot to say about teaching children. Most of the references have to do with parents teaching their own children, not the local church's children's department. We in the church have designed church programs that actually encourage parents to abdicate their God-given responsibilities.

In many of today's churches we have a "family service" where the babies are in the nursery, the preschoolers are in their rooms, the children are in their classes, youth are in their service, and the adults are in the sanctuary. I think it's time that we as ministers take a stand for the families of our churches.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says "These commandments that I give you today...Impress them on your children...talk about...at home...as you walk along the road...when you lie down and get up." It's difficult for kids to see parents fulfill the Scriptures that instruct us to worship God if they're in a different room.

The church has done the family a disservice by providing for the dividing of the family. Will the children of tomorrow have a worship model? Will the model be only that of the professional minister or the Sunday school teacher? Will kids ever see "real" Christianity in action? Sitting in church with a wiggly, squirming child may not be anyone's idea of a good time, but the end result has eternal rewards.

According to a mainstream denomination, 37 percent of children disappear from the church in the seventh grade. Where do they go? More important, why do they go? They're in children's church and Sunday school one year and gone the next year.

The kids in my church have 24 family worship opportunities per year. I've been asked to cut that in half. Children in my department from ages 6 to 11 will now have less than 100 family worship opportunities in the most formative time of their lives.

Psalms 78:5-7 says, "He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, for which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them..." Scripture is clear, children should be in worship with their parents!

Chris Daniel is a Children's Pastor in Florida.

# WHERE WE WERE AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

A Progress Report  
from the National  
Department of  
Christian Education

By Rev. Rick Wulfstiegl

**R**ecently, I visited a pastor in the Northern California area. After 18 years of trying to have a baby and after a few attempts at adopting, the couple finally adopted a beautiful baby boy. During the service that Sunday morning, I noticed how the mother and baby clung to each other. The dependency of the six-month old child and the intimacy of the loving mother made me think that this is the way we should encounter God.

As this century nears its end, the Lord is calling (it seems in stereo surround sound), leaders and workers to intimacy and dependency. The Christian Education hour is no longer just the learning hour with another story about David. It is a time of GOD ENCOUNTER - where the reality of each learner's pain and common struggles comes face to face with a solid biblical foundation.

It is a new day in Christian education—it is a time for SPIRITUAL FORMATION! Sunday School goals, both traditionally and currently are to EXPERIENCE GOD, KNOW TRUTH and BUILD RELATIONSHIPS. Each week over 57,819 children, youth and adult attend a FOURSQUARE SUNDAY SCHOOL in North America. On an average one out of every five adults is involved in this life-changing ministry.

Children and families are becoming a higher priority of society and church. Part of the goal of the Christian Education Department is to provide training tools and resources. GROWING FAMILIES GOD'S WAY, PARENTING WITH LOVE AND LOGIC, FRESH START SERIES are just a few of the many helps that have become available through the department.

Discipling the "CARE GIVERS" for effective ministry has been a lead strategy of the department's ministry. In 1996, the National Christian Education office and District personnel have joined together to provide divisional and district conferences, with over 5,800 pastors, teachers and workers being encouraged, equipped and enabled. DIRECTIONS, a quarterly newsletter of "how-to's," current trends and philosophies is another tool designed to assist the local church.

GOOD NEWS BEARS continues to be a leading source in "bringing a child to Christ" and helping that child take Jesus Christ to his or her world! This ministry is one of many innovative outreach ministries designed to reach a new generation. Attendance in this ministry has grown substantially with 23,643 reached every week. GOOD NEWS BEARS leadership materials are now available in Spanish!

\*BASELINE a new addition to the "I BELIEVE" series, focuses on foundations of faith in a worldly minded age. This curriculum is designed for the middle school age and is now available through Foursquare Publications. (\*working title has been R.O.C.K. Solid)

Foursquare Publications continues to supply resources that offers a balanced Bible teaching from the Pentecostal/Charismatic perspective. WORD & SPIRIT is a relatively new curriculum that has met with an overwhelming response in the Foursquare Churches. This material is edited by Foursquare Children's Pastors. A small revenue is generated from your purchase of these resources and then reinvested in developing new materials, helping pioneer churches, and in co-sponsoring CE training conferences. Last year \$21,814 was invested to help pioneer churches get started in their CE training.

Recognition of the growing need for developing church leaders has created a Foursquare Bible Institute strategy. A committee has been set in place to provide a definition of educational purpose, criteria, certification process and application for prospective and established institutes. Four Institutes are currently recognized and approved by the Foursquare Bible Institute Committee and ICFG Board.

Thank you for your church's faithfulness by contributing through your CE/Sunday School tithes and ordering your church resources through Foursquare Publications. Together we do make a difference!

# Here's Some... Beary Good News

## Quartz Hill, CA

Deborah McLellan, Director of Christian Education, wanted the church and especially the "Good News Bears" to become more aware of the lost without Christ and discover ways to evangelize. The emphasis was on winning 300,000 souls for Jesus. The method was to raise money to print the tracts needed to win these souls.

The group sold candy bars and in just five weeks, God helped the church complete the task. On March 16 a group from the church took a tour of the Four-square Missions Press and as a surprise, presented a check for \$2,000.00.

# Idea Share

## Closing the Generation Gap

Senior adults are recruited as "Share Partners" to come into our elementary mid week program and share hobbies with them. Many senior adults have hobbies that have either become or are becoming lost arts. Senior adults can spark enthusiasm and interest by explaining hobbies which many children know little about. Children are making exciting discoveries in crafts, music, memorabilia collections and many other hobby areas. The spin-off to our "Share Partners" is that this opportunity brings generations together and helps close the gap. A second spin off to this project is that the senior adults begin to develop relationships with children and provides the adults with a renewed sense of usefulness.

Suggested by Cindi Bower, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Collins, Colorado at the Children's Pastor's Conference recently held in San Diego, California.



## Give Your Kids a Lift this Summer!

### Gospel Light's Vacation Bible School

Available Now Through Foursquare Publications

SonRise Balloon Adventure Starter Kit - A \$64 value for only \$34.99

Music and Skit Production Pack - A \$68 value for only \$49.99

SonRise Balloon Adventure Resource Pack - A \$58 value for only \$34.99

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