

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson One

Children and Repentance

Biblical obedience to the Gospel necessitates a twofold response. There must be a turning from what is wrong—Repentance—and a turning to God—Faith.

“. . . ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Repentance as Shown in the Scriptures

First of all, we need to see from the Scriptures that repentance is part of the Gospel message. If it is, it must be included in our evangelism.

Although the actual word “repent” is seldom used in the Old Testament in relation to men, the concept of turning from sin is very evident:

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7). “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit . . . Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Ezekiel 18:31, 32).

The Old Testament affirms that it is God who gives true repentance. Ephraim said: “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented” (Jeremiah 31:18, 19). Repentance conveys the idea of leaving something behind, or quitting it. Often in Old Testament times people interpreted repentance very lightly, and felt that God would be impressed by a display of sorrow which was only surface deep. At no time did God countenance this. His reply was, “Rend your heart, and not your garments, and return unto the Lord your God” (Joel 2:13). True repentance is inward, not merely external and superficial. It is a heart response which shows itself in changed attitudes and behavior. God demanded this response throughout the Old Testament.

In the opening pages of the New Testament, we meet John the Baptist fearlessly preaching this same message. “Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). Shortly afterwards the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed the same message, “The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). Furthermore, He made sure that the disciples would continue to preach this message by giving them specific instructions to do so, in the Great Commission:

“. . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations” (Luke 24:47).

The apostles took their Master’s commission seriously. Listen to Peter and Paul as they preached the Gospel:

“But shewed first unto them at Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:20).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

“God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

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“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

The foundation of the Christian life is “repentance from dead works” and “faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1).

Repentance is part of the Gospel message. God’s clear command to sinners is to repent.

Repentance Defined

Repentance is not tears and extreme emotions, although these can be involved. A child can shed tears when he has been found out for doing wrong, but that is not repentance. It is not anguish, distress, loss of appetite and sleeplessness, although these can happen, especially with some adults. It is not conviction of or sorrow for sin, although without some measure of these there can be no repentance. It is not a work which one does for salvation, for repentance is granted by God (Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25). Nor is it another word which is interchangeable with the word “faith”. We have already seen that Christ told the people to “repent and believe the Gospel”. Paul described his Gospel ministry as “Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Repentance is much more than admitting you are a sinner or feeling sorry. In the New Testament the word translated “repent” means to change one’s mind. It is a change of mind and attitude towards sin, and towards God, which leads to a change of direction and behavior. A change of mind which does not lead to a change of direction is not a genuine change of mind.

Repentance involves firstly the mind—knowing what is right and wrong, knowing what sin is, knowing that I have sinned personally. It means that in my mind I agree with God about sin. Repentance involves secondly the emotions—being truly sorry for my sin. It also involves thirdly the will—being willing to turn from sin and wanting to change the direction of my life. There must be no compromise here—we cannot follow Christ if we are not willing to forsake sin.

We can see these various elements involved in repentance in the parable of the Prodigal

Son. The Prodigal “came to himself”—he came to understand what he had done. He saw his sin in its true light. This was a change of mind. There was real conviction when he said: “I have sinned”. His will was submissive for “he arose and came”. He turned from his sin, he changed his direction, and came home.

Of course there are degrees of repentance. It may be small, but it must be there. It may not be much understood, but it must take place.

Repentance does not end at conversion—a Christian lives a life of repentance, just as he lives a life of faith. Both deepen as the believer (child or adult) makes progress in his Christian life. But repentance must be there, to some extent, at conversion.

Teaching Repentance to Children

The doctrine of repentance cannot be separated from other truths which we dealt with earlier—truths about God and sin. Teach the children that, because God is holy and just, He cannot excuse sin. Teach them that God and sin cannot be together and that God alone can take away their sin.

Teach what sin is. It is vital that children come to understand that wrong doing is sin against God, that they have turned to their own way.

Teach that each one is a sinner. Each child needs to come to a conviction that he personally is a sinner. Appeal to the conscience of the child—obviously you cannot truly awaken his conscience, only the Holy Spirit can do this.

Teach that he must be willing to turn from sin. Having seen what sin is, and having been convinced that he personally is a sinner, the child must be prepared to turn from his sin to God. Children have gone their own way. In order to be saved they must be ready to change the direction of their lives and to turn from their own way to God. The following examples may help you teach this important truth to the children:

“Can you think back to times you cheated in school, or told lies to get out of trouble? Doing those things didn’t worry you at all. But now it’s different. You see that you have been disobedient to God and that your life is displeasing to Him, and you are worried about this. If you want to be right with God, the first step is to be willing to turn from everything in your life that you know to be wrong. You know the wrong things in your life—are you willing to be finished with them and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?”

Or “Mike had listened carefully to the Bible teaching, he knew he had broken God’s Law and sometimes he lay awake at night thinking about it. The teacher had said, “If you want to be a child of God, you must be willing and ready to turn from everything you know to be wrong. Mike thought of a model racing car that was in his toy box.

One day a boy in his class had it at school, and Mike had brought it home and kept it. He knew he had broken God’s commands, he knew he was a sinner. He tossed and turned in bed. “I want to keep that car, and I will.” Mike wasn’t prepared to turn from sin. He did not want the changes which he knew God would make. So he was not yet ready to trust the Lord Jesus

as his Saviour.”

Or “Yes, you’ve gone your own way, not God’s. That’s why you find it so easy to think unkind thoughts, to put yourself before others. Are you so sorry that you’ve gone your own way, that you want to go God’s way instead? If that’s how it is with you, tell the Lord Jesus about it; ask Him to forgive you for going your own way and tell Him that you want to go God’s way.”

Or “We have been learning that to repent means to be sorry that you’ve sinned against God, and to be willing to turn from sin. I want to tell you about two children—which one, do you think, repented? Alice looked around. No one was watching. Quickly she slipped a bar of chocolate into her pocket. Then as if nothing had happened, she walked towards the door. Just as she was going out a lady said, “Excuse me, I’d like to see what’s in your pocket.” Of course she found the chocolate. They telephoned her mother, and she came to collect a sobbing daughter. She was so upset . . . ‘If I’d known she was watching I’d never have done it,’ she groaned.”

“Philip walked slowly home from school. He wasn’t too happy about himself. He knew his life wasn’t right. He knew he didn’t please God. He really wanted to be different . . . he knew some of his friends would laugh if he stopped doing some of the wrong things they did together. But somehow, to be living in a way that would please God seemed more important than anything. So, on the way home Philip told God how sorry he was, that he wanted to be different. He asked God to forgive him, and to take over and be in charge of him.”

Questions like these can be used as you apply teaching on repentance

“Are you willing to be finished with those things that you know to be wrong and displeasing to God?”

“Do you really want to quit your bad, disobedient ways?” “Do you know that being a Christian will mean living in obedience to the Lord Jesus, and leaving sin behind?”

“Will you tell the Lord Jesus that you have been sinning against Him, and that you want to be different?”

“You can tell Him, ‘Lord, I have been living for myself, but now I want to live for you.’ “If you become a Christian, you will need to turn away from sins like lying, bad temper and disobedience. Are you willing to do so?” Repentance can be taught in Bible lessons where the main character repents. For example, you can show how Saul of Tarsus turned from his own way to God’s way (Acts 9:1-22); how Zacchaeus showed that he had repented by making restitution (Luke 19:1-10); the Prodigal Son lesson (Luke 15:11-32) is excellent for teaching children the meaning of repentance.

Also memory verses such as the following can be taught:

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

“. . . there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth”
(Luke 15:10).

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord” (Isaiah 55:7).

Whatever the means, make sure the boys and girls are taught this truth, for there is no salvation without repentance. As we teach, we will be praying that the Holy Spirit will bring children to that place where they are prepared to turn from sin to God.

“Problems” in Teaching Repentance to Children

Teaching repentance in evangelism has been the practice of the church down the centuries. It is a message, however, which has not gone unchallenged. We want to look at some of the objections to teaching repentance to children.

“Including repentance sacrifices simplicity, and makes the way of salvation too complicated for boys and girls.”

There is no doubt that it is more difficult to teach it than to leave it out. It requires careful thought to simplify this doctrine so that children will understand. But truth must never be sacrificed on the grounds of simplicity or expediency. Our first priority is to find out exactly what the Bible teaches. Then we must work out how we can communicate that to the children.

“Fewer children will respond.”

If fewer children respond because our teaching has become more Biblical, we need to look carefully at what we were doing beforehand, and at what kind of “results” we were getting! One of the old Puritans used to say, “We must weigh our converts, not count them.” Concern for results should never influence us to alter or weaken our message. We must be faithful to the Scriptures and, indeed, to the children. We can leave the results in God’s hands.

“The child will not understand how to repent.”

We could just as well assert that the child will not understand how to believe. No child or adult can repent or believe until the Holy Spirit works in his life. If the child is old enough to understand that he has gone his own way, he is old enough to be taught that he must turn from that way to God. But he cannot and will not do so until God grants “repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

“You are putting obstacles in the way of children coming to Christ.”

When we are teaching that repentance is necessary, we are not putting a stumbling block in the way of children, but rather a stepping stone. It is very important to teach the message of salvation which the Bible teaches. The Bible plainly teaches that repentance is an integral part of conversion.

Avoid, however, giving the child the impression that he must reform his life or perform good works before coming to Christ. He must come as he is, with his sin, casting himself on the mercy of God. But there must be a desire to turn from the wrong in his life, otherwise he does not see what he needs to be saved from.

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Lesson One Test

- (1) Biblical obedience to the Gospel necessitates a twofold response. What is it?
God's clear command to sinners is to (?)
- (2) List several things in this lesson that repentance is NOT.
- (3) What does the word "repentance" literally mean in the New Testament?
- (4) A change of mind that does not lead to a change in (?) is not truly a change of mind.
- (5) Repentance does not end at conversion—a Christian lives (?)
- (6) There is no salvation without (?)
- (7) Several objections to preaching repentance to Children were given in this lesson. List of those objections, and how an evangelist should answer it.

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Lesson Two

Children and Faith

Repentance and faith are two doctrines which cannot be separated. They do not mean the same. Repentance is not faith, faith is not repentance. The two words are not interchangeable. The Lord Jesus Christ made this clear when he preached, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

When a person truly repents, he will turn in faith to God. Where there is true faith, there is also real repentance. True faith includes repentance. Both are present in true conversion. Someone has well said, “We are saved by faith alone, but the faith which saves is never alone.”

We must keep this in mind as we consider the great tenet that we are saved through faith alone in Christ alone. We are not saved by repentance, but we cannot be saved without it. When a person truly believes, he is, at the same time, repentant.

Faith as Shown in the Scriptures

The need for faith is taught throughout the Old Testament.
“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established...” (2 Chronicles 20:20).
“The just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)

Furthermore, men of God, from Genesis to Malachi, were men of faith—a fact highlighted in Hebrews chapter 11. When God promised Abram an heir and that his seed would be as the stars, Abram “believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

We can often teach children about these men, and we can use illustrations from their lives to help children understand what faith is. In Romans and Galatians, Paul strongly refutes the argument that salvation is ever by works: the Old Testament saints were saved by faith in the Saviour God had promised would come.

In the New Testament, the theme of faith is continued and developed. The Lord Jesus Christ taught the necessity for faith or saving belief: “Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life . . .” (John 5:24).

We read, “whosoever believeth” in John 3:16, and “he that believeth on me shall never thirst” in John 6:35. When Christ saw true faith, He rejoiced (Matthew 8:10). In the Great Commission, the Lord Jesus Christ taught that “he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Faith is vital. This was the Apostles’ conviction and message. Peter told Cornelius and his household, “Whosoever believeth in Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). Paul

fearlessly explained and defended this doctrine, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Paul rejected outright any adding to faith—salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 2:16).

Faith Defined

What is faith? It means believing—but “believing” can have several meanings. For example, Mrs Smith finds herself in difficult circumstances, and Mrs Brown gives a word of encouragement: “Don’t get depressed—just believe that everything will work out.” This is blind optimism, which the world mistakenly calls faith. Nor is faith “a leap in the dark”: Mr Jones is looking for a certain house. He has no idea where it is, but as he drives along he turns right then left, and right again. He has a “leap in the dark” outlook, for he takes certain actions without any information or reasons as a basis for doing so. Biblical faith is not like that. True saving faith is that act by which a person is enabled by the Holy Spirit to depend on Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Faith, like repentance, involves the mind, the emotions and the will. And, Further, True Biblical faith must be accompanied by action. (James 2:17)

Knowledge

Before a child, or anyone, can have faith, he must know about God and about Jesus Christ. All trust is ultimately dependent on knowledge. So it is important that we teach children about the One whom we are inviting them to trust. We need to teach them why He can save. Our evangelism should have a doctrinal emphasis. But head knowledge alone will never save; knowing is not having faith. Even the devils believe—they have head knowledge about Jesus Christ (James 2:19).

Assent

There is an emotional element in faith—an assent and conviction that what God has revealed is true. Faith is more than assent, but it is never less. This emotional element is essential and included in saving faith. The sinner’s heart needs to be touched, so that he is convinced about what he has heard concerning God and His Son. These truths have gripped him. But this still falls short of saving faith. Remember, not only do the devils believe, they also tremble—their emotions are affected (James 2:19).

Trust

There must be a reliance upon Christ; the will is submissive and surrendered. Having some understanding about God’s answer to his need, being convinced of the truth of what he understands, the sinner puts his trust and confidence in Christ alone as his personal Lord and Saviour.

The New Testament emphasizes the concept of “believing unto”—one’s confidence being placed in One outside of oneself. It means relying on Christ as the source of pardon and everlasting life. The acrostic:

F- Forsaking
A- All
I- I
T- Trust
H- Him

puts it perfectly.

This threefold response is possible only as the Holy Spirit works in hearts. Faith is a gift of God. This does not mean that God believes for the sinners. Rather the sinner himself believes and trusts, but as enabled to by God. It needs to be emphasized over and over again that it is not enough to exhort children just to believe that Jesus Christ died for them to be saved. They need to actively and consciously put their trust in Jesus Christ, on the basis of what He has done for them on the cross.

Teaching about Faith to Children

We must think about the words we use. If we talk only about “believing”, the children will get the impression that head knowledge is sufficient. Use words like trust, rely on, depend on, give yourself over to Him, receive Him. Explain the concepts that are used. When teaching about men of faith, show what their faith was: acting upon the Word of God. Abel offered the right sacrifice (Genesis 4:1-16); Noah built an ark to save his family (Genesis 6, 7, 8); Abram left Ur (Genesis 12); the children of Israel killed the Passover lamb and applied the blood to the door posts (Exodus 12, 13); they looked to the brazen serpent to be healed (Numbers 21:1-9). All of them did so because they believed God.

The following may be of some help in explaining what faith is:

“Boys and girls, faith is not just believing with your head, that there is a God and that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for you. Faith is not just knowing for sure that God loves you and wants to save you from sin. Faith is more than that. It means coming sincerely to the Lord Jesus and trusting Him to make you clean. It means trusting Him as your Saviour now and for ever.”

Or “Suppose I was very sick and went to the doctor. The doctor gave me medicine and said, “Take this, it will make you better. I take the medicine home, I look at it, I know it will make me well. But I leave it on the table. Will I get better? Of course not! Not until I take it.

Perhaps you know you’re a sinner, you’re sure Jesus Christ can take away sin and change your life. But knowing that will not change anything. You have to ask Him to take away your sin and to change you. If you don’t, you will not be a Christian, even though you know so much about the Lord Jesus.”

Or “Boys and girls, look at this chair. I’m thinking of sitting down on it. I wonder if I should? I know it is a good strong chair. Others have sat on it. I know it would hold me up. Now, tell me when the chair is some use to me, and when am I really trusting it?” (Put your hand on the back, ask the children if you’re trusting the chair. Sit, but don’t let your weight rest on it. Repeat the question. Sit properly on the chair, and ask the question again). “The chair is no use to me until I actually trust myself to it, and sit on it. You can know that the Lord Jesus is the only Saviour, and not be saved. Only when you depend on Him to save you, will He be your Saviour.”

Or “Mary was sure that she was better than most of the girls in her class. She said her prayers, was honest, went to church, did not swear. She was sure that God was more pleased with her than with others. She was trying to become a Christian. But what was she doing? She was depending upon what she did, and what she was. This is not faith; this is works. Faith is depending upon someone else, and the only One that we can depend upon for salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ. Only He can make us right with God and acceptable to God.”

Some children (and adults) can remember the exact date when they first put their faith in Jesus Christ. Others cannot. The important thing is to know that they are now trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Children need to realize that the initial trusting in Christ is the beginning of a life of faith. Their faith will deepen and grow, as they understand more of God’s Word and are obedient to it.

God’s clear command to sinners is to believe. A child cannot be saved without having saving faith in Christ. So we should take great care to teach what faith is, and earnestly pray that God will enable many of the children we teach to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is only as God works in the hearts of the children that they are able to do this.
“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”
(Ephesians 2:8).

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Lesson Two Test

- (1) What does the acrostic "FAITH" stand for ?
- (2) (?) and (?) are two doctrines which cannot be separated.
- (3) Faith, like repentance, involves the (?), the (?) and the (?).
- (4) True Biblical faith must be accompanied by (?)

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Lesson Three

The Work of God in the Life of a Child

What happens in a child's life when he comes to the Lord Jesus Christ? What does God promise to do for all who come to Him in repentance and faith? What is salvation? Children should be taught the answers to these questions, even before they are saved, as part of our evangelism. This was the practice of the apostles. Peter, preaching to Cornelius and his household, taught, "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). When preaching to Jews too, Peter told them what God would do for all who repented and believed:

"Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Paul followed a similar pattern. In Antioch he declared, "by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

God gives many blessings to those who come to Christ. We shall consider some of these.

Justification

Justification is a legal term dealing with our standing before God the Judge; it means the opposite of condemnation. Condemnation means to declare a person guilty, justification means to declare a person to be innocent. This is what happens when a person trusts Jesus Christ. God declares him right before Him.

There are two aspects to this great truth. The first is forgiveness of sins. When a sinner comes to Christ, his sin is put away ever, it is forgiven and forgotten by God. This is the aspect of justification which Peter referred to when he said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

David wrote of this experience in Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us!" Such forgiveness is possible because Christ took

our sin, it was credited to Him and He took the punishment for it. On the cross He was punished as if He had committed that sin.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

We should teach children that when they come to Christ their sin is no longer held against them, it is gone and forgotten forever. It might be taught like this:

"Alan was really upset. His cricket ball had smashed the glass in his aunt's front door. He had been careless and he knew it was his fault. He went to tell what had happened. 'I'm really

sorry,' he said, and he was. 'That's all right Alan,' his aunt replied. 'I'll pay for it. Forget it ever happened.' That was real forgiveness, wasn't it? It is just a little picture of God's forgiveness. When we come to Him, truly sorry that we have been disobedient, it is as if He says, 'I forgive you, I have paid for your disobedience.' He did—when His Son died on the cross. And He will never hold your sin against you. In Jeremiah 31:34 He says He will remember it no more."

The second aspect of justification is that Christ's righteousness is credited to the sinner who repents and believes. The word the Bible uses is "impute" which means to put to the account of, or to credit to. When a sinner is justified, Christ's righteousness is put to the account of the sinner, and so the sinner can stand before God on a righteous basis. God treats the sinner as if he had kept all His holy Laws perfectly, for Christ did just that on the sinner's behalf. The sinner is now "in Christ", dressed in His Righteousness.

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21)

It is very important to teach this great truth often to boys and girls. Explain that when they trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, God sees them as pure as Christ in His sight. The following illustration may be useful:

"Malcolm knew what his school report would be like. The teacher would write 'Poor work', 'Could do better', 'A very poor result'. He wished he could have a report with top marks all the way! If God were writing a report on your life would it be like this: 'Disobedient to God's Law', 'Goes his own way', 'Thinks angry thoughts', 'Self is first? With a report like that you could never, never please God. If your life is to please God, the report would have to say, 'Perfect every day of his life.' There is only one person who could have a report like that—the Lord Jesus Christ. But the wonderful thing is that from the moment you trust Him as your Saviour, God takes away your sin and looks on you as if you had that perfect report!"

The white page of the Wordless Book teaches this great doctrine. The narrative often used with the white page is the resurrection of Christ. He was "raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). The white page represents the believer's position before God—pure in Christ's righteousness. It does not teach about our condition or victory over sin. Also, there is an interesting little story in Zechariah 3:3- 5 which could be used as a picture of justification.

Believing children often think that they need to be "saved" again, if they sin even once. Teaching the meaning of justification is the best way to deal with this problem. It is important that the children understand that justification does not change them or make them perfect, but that it changes their position and makes them right before God. Justification has saved them from the penalty of sin.

Regeneration

When God saves a child He creates a new person: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Regeneration means being born from above: “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Without this change within, a person cannot be a believer. And it is a radical change—as radical as being raised from the dead! “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).

This radical change is not the remaking of the old nature. God gives a new nature: His own nature (1 Peter 1:4). The old nature is not eliminated, but the new will be more and more evident.

Children need to realize that when they come to faith in Christ they are “born again” God changes them from being someone who wanted to go their own way to someone who wants to go God’s way. This change will be evident in their lives. Just as a child born into a family will cry, walk and talk; so someone born into God’s family will “cry”—they will want to talk to God. They will “walk”, albeit stumbling at first, as they walk in obedience to God’s commands. They will talk—to others about their faith.

Children must know that there will be changes in their lives because they will be new example, Paul, Zacchaeus or the Philippian jailer. Also we should teach and explain the Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-15). We must be careful not to give the impression that we expect children to behave as adult Christians. But they should know that regeneration is part of salvation. Then as they see evidence of the new nature, it will strengthen their assurance that they are truly born again.

No one is ever justified who is not regenerated. No one is ever regenerated who is not justified. When someone comes to Christ, their position before God is changed from being condemned to being justified. But not only does that individual have a changed position, he is also a changed person, with a new nature.

Salvation

We often talk of being saved, and it is a word often used in the Bible:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

The meaning is to be “rescued” or “delivered” from sin. The word “salvation” covers the whole work of God in delivering us from the penalty, power and presence of sin.” By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

“...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

This salvation was accomplished for us once and for all at Calvary. Through His atoning work on the cross, Christ obtained our salvation. When a child trusts in Christ, this saving work becomes effective for him personally. For the believer, salvation is in 3 phases: The past—God has saved us from the condemnation and slavery of sin (justification and

regeneration). God “hath saved us and called us with an holy calling” (2 Timothy 1:9). The present—God is saving us from the power of sin (sanctification). “Unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12, 13).

The future—God will save us from the possibility and presence of sin (glorification). “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11).

Children can pick up the phrase and use it without having any understanding of what it means. If they do not understand “saved”, they will not understand “Saviour”. The meaning of “saved” is “rescued” or “delivered”. You might use an illustration like this:

“A man was standing peering into a deep well. Splash! He had fallen in. He couldn’t swim, but he splashed and struggled. He tried to clutch the walls, but they were steep and slimy. Down, down, down he went into the dark water. He couldn’t do a thing to help himself. He was in real danger. He was drowning!

It is just like that with the sin in your life. Sin keeps you away from God and you are in great danger: the danger of being separated from God for ever. Sin is so strong that you cannot do anything to rescue yourself—just as the man in the well could not save himself. He cried for help, but would anyone hear him?

Yes, another man did. He ran to the well, reached down and pulled the drowning man to safety. He had saved him from the water.

You need someone to save, or rescue, you from sin. There is only one Person who can save you—the Lord Jesus Christ . When you cry to Him to rescue you from sin, He will. He will save you from the grip sin has on your life. The Bible says “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). He will save you from the punishment you deserve. Then when He takes you to heaven you will be without sin and you will never sin again.”

All of these aspects of salvation need to be emphasized. Children often realize that they are saved from punishment, but have not been taught that the grip, or reign, of sin is broken, although sin still indwells them until they are glorified.

Eternal Life

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

“Eternal life” is a phrase which we often use in our evangelism. It occurs in many hymns and choruses. But what does it mean? “Life that goes on for ever and ever” is the explanation which most children will give. This explanation is true but inadequate. It emphasizes the duration of eternal life, but says nothing of the quality. Eternal life also means being alive to God:

“And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

The word to “know” means to be united with, to live in close personal relationship with God. Instead of being separated from God we are united with Him forever.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). It is important that children realize that the Christian life is not lived out in our own strength, but that God the Holy Spirit indwells all who believe. Sometimes children long to trust the Saviour, but feel they could never live the Christian life. They need to be taught that the Holy Spirit will live in them and will enable them to live for God.

Being Placed in the Family of God

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

Each one who believes is given the right to be called a child of God. What a wonderful truth to teach children. They should know that each one who trusts Christ becomes a child of God and God is his heavenly Father. This means that the believer can come to God, as a child comes to his father. He can share all his problems and joys with his Heavenly Father, and experience His love and constant care.

When a person is regenerated he is born into the family of God. Through adoption, which takes place at the same moment, he receives all the freedom and privileges of adult sonship: “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15).

In Christ we have “all spiritual blessings”. If our salvation thrills us, this will be obvious to the children. We should urge children to come to Christ so that these blessings might be theirs. Over a period of time we will teach all of these truths to children but we should not try to do so all at once! They should be taught as they are found in the text or Bible lesson being used.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Three Test

God gives many blessings to those who come to Christ.
List five of them given in this lesson.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Four

Salvation—the Beginning of a Life of Obedience

The Bible makes it clear that when a person, old or young, becomes a Christian there will be a change of direction in his life. He will not be perfect; but he will be different. He will not be all he should be, but he will not be what he used to be!

The child evangelist may ask questions about this:

“Should I tell unsaved children that if they trust Christ as their Saviour, God will expect to see a change in their lives?”

“Should I teach unsaved children that, while becoming a Christian is the most wonderful thing which can happen to them, living as a Christian will not be easy?”

“Is the step of trusting Christ one that unsaved children should be encouraged to think carefully about, and weigh thoroughly before taking it?”

An examination of New Testament teaching on this subject leads to the conclusion that the answer to all of these questions is unreservedly “Yes.”

The Ministry of the Lord Jesus

When unsaved people came to Him and spoke about starting to follow Him, He explained to them carefully all that would be involved:

In Mark chapter 10:17 the rich young ruler came to the Lord Jesus seeking eternal life. He was an earnest enquirer whom the Lord Jesus loved. The Lord put His finger on the sin in this young man’s life, to show him that he was not really keeping God’s commandments. He did not love his neighbor as himself, because he was not willing to see what he had and give it to the poor. His riches were more important to him than God and eternal life. He went away grieved because he was not willing to give Jesus Christ first place in his life.

In John 4:15 the Samaritan woman was very enthusiastic in asking for the “water” Jesus Christ offered. But the Lord Jesus put His finger on something in her life that she would first have to be willing to deal with: “Go, call thy husband, and come hither” (verse 16). She had to realize that receiving the “water” had far-reaching implications.

In Luke 9:57-62, three different people spoke to the Lord Jesus about following him. In all three cases, He made it very clear to them that there would be sacrifices if they were to take such a step (verses 58, 59, 62).

In Luke 14:25-33, the Lord Jesus emphasized to the multitudes who were listening to Him

how essential it was to weigh up carefully and think about clearly, all that was involved in taking the step of following Him—before starting to do so.

The Ministry of the Apostles

When the Apostles were evangelizing, they often underlined the importance of baptism. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). In response to this message, those who were saved were then baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:6,12, 36; 9:18; 10:47; 16:15,33; 18:8; 22:16). The Apostles’ primary purpose was to show their listeners beforehand that if they trusted Christ, He would expect them to confess Him publicly before others—no matter what it cost. They were letting them know that they were not being called to secret discipleship—they had to be prepared to be known as Christians.

In their evangelism the Apostles made no secret of the fact that those who trusted in Christ would, at the same time, “turn from these vanities” (Acts 14:15), and that the Lord Jesus would turn “away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26). Those who listened to the early evangelists knew that believing in Christ would mean a stand being taken, and a price being paid.

It is obvious also from what Paul wrote in his Epistles, that he had warned his listeners concerning the possible sufferings involved in taking a stand as a Christian. “For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know” (1 Thessalonians 3:4).

Some of the Words Used With Regard to Becoming a Christian

Conversion

The Lord Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren” (Acts 15:3). “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

This word means “to turn around”, “to go in the opposite direction”; and it was used in evangelism to indicate clearly that trusting Christ would involve a complete turn around.

Obedience

In many places in the Bible it is clearly taught that coming to Christ is a step of obedience—the first step in a life of obedience; and that those who come to Christ for salvation come on bended knee. Salvation is the first step in submission to Jesus Christ as Lord, and confession of Him as Lord.

We can see this in many parts of the New Testament:

The Gospel (the truth, or faith, which saves) demands obedience: “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). “For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).

“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name” (Romans 1:5).

“But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:26).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22). Jesus Christ is preached to unsaved people—not just as a Saviour to trust, but as a Lord to obey. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all :)” (Acts 10:36).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:9,10,12,13).

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Corinthians 4:5). “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him :” (Colossians 2:6). “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

Salvation is obeying the truth we have heard—”Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Romans 6:16, 17) . The Christian life is a life of increasing and progressive submission to Jesus Christ as Lord;

but the first step in that submission, be it ever so small, is taken when the child obeys the command of Jesus Christ and trusts Him as Saviour.

Disciple

The word “disciple” means “learner” or “follower of another’s teaching”. “A disciple was not only a pupil; but an adherent” (W E Vine). It is used interchangeably in the Acts of the Apostles with the word “Christian”. Notice especially Acts 11:26, “The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”. In other words, a child who becomes a Christian becomes at the same time, a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ.

The Honesty of the Evangelist

It is but fair and honest that the evangelist should make clear to the child all that is involved in trusting Jesus Christ as His Saviour, before he does so. The child who takes this step, does so with his eyes open. We do not want children to be disillusioned, disappointed or embittered when they realise there are problems in the Christian life, and they have not been prepared for them. It is obvious from what has been outlined above that there is a cost involved in trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and in following Him. (See Luke 14:25 - 33).

What Does This Mean for a Child, and How Does it Affect our Message of Salvation?

Let us think back to the three questions asked at the beginning of this chapter. In the light of what we have learned, we can come to three conclusions:

The unsaved child needs to know that God will operate changes in his life, if he trusts Jesus Christ as his Saviour. If he is not willing for these changes, he is not ready to trust Christ. He needs to understand that trusting Christ is the first step in a life of obedience to the Lord Jesus. Getting up a few minutes early to talk to God, making an effort to be helpful at home, letting others choose a game rather than himself, could all be involved later in following the Lord.

The unsaved child needs to realize that the Christian life is not free of problems, and that it can involve difficulties.

The unsaved child needs to consider carefully the step of trusting Christ, so that he is fully aware of what he is doing. He will need to think about what the Lord Jesus would want him to do, be willing to obey him and be prepared to be known as a Christian. “It might be that when your friends find out that you are a Christian, they will say ‘We’re not going to be your friends any more.’ This is “taking up his Cross”

However, we must be balanced in our evangelism. We must be careful not to give the impression to the children that, if they come to the Lord Jesus, they will be “happy all the time”, or that “their problems will all be solved”. We also need to tell children, with authority and confidence, what God will freely do for them when they come to Him through Christ.

The Holy Spirit will come to live in them, and He will give them joy, and the strength necessary to take their stand, as well as the power to live a life pleasing to God. (Matthew 10:32,33).

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Four Test

- (1) The Bible makes it clear that when a person, old or young, becomes a Christian there will be a change of (?) in his life.
 - (2) In their evangelism the Apostles made clear that those who turned to Christ must turn away from their (?)
- (3) What are three words given in this lesson, refers to someone who has trusted Christ?
 - (4) What does each of these three words mean?
- (5) The unsaved child needs to realize that the Christian life is not free of (?), and that it can involve (?).

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Five

Use the Whole Program

If children come for one hour each week to your Sunday school, or to your children's meeting, you have them 1/168 of their time! Many of them spend the rest of their time in an environment in which God is not recognized, and where anti-Christian influences are rampant. So it is vital that you make the most of every minute of that hour you spend with the children. Try to use all of your program to teach and evangelize.

Songs

Teach songs which have a clear, accurate and true to Scripture Gospel message. Sometimes you will choose a song which reinforces the truth you are emphasizing in the Bible lesson. Other songs you select will teach an aspect of the message of salvation which has not been emphasized in the Bible lesson. Carefully plan what you will sing, and think about why you choose particular songs. Some songs which teach different aspects of the Gospel include...

- Do you know that you've been born again?
- Love, Love L - O - V - E
- I believe the Bible
- One way God said to get to heaven
- Good News

For God so loved the world

Long before I knew Him

Do not have a random selection from week to week! Be careful not to choose songs which, although they have an attractive tune, teach very little.

It is wise to limit the number of songs you sing over a period of time. You want the children to learn those which you sing—they find this impossible if you inundate them with new ones. Remember that these “musical messages” will be sung in many homes where the Gospel message might not otherwise be heard. We want the children to know the songs well, and the ones they sing should have a good Gospel message.

Memory verses

Memorizing Scripture is a very important part of evangelism among children. They may forget much of what is said, but well taught Bible verses will remain with them forever. If some reject or neglect the rest of what they have been taught, it is a great comfort to know that they still have in their minds those verses of the Word of God, which is “quick, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). Obviously, this means taking time during the program to teach carefully selected Bible verses. Do not depend upon the children learning them at home. Encourage them to do so, but recognize the fact that not all will. Stay with the same memory verse until you are satisfied that all the children know it. It is better that they know one or two well than merely know snippets of four or five. Select Bible verses which teach an important truth, rather than verses which are narrative in emphasis. The following suggestions of verses in the four areas of truth may be helpful:

God—Genesis 1:1; Psalm 145:17; Psalm 103:8; 1 Chronicles 29:11; John 3:16;
Romans 5:8, 10, 12.

Man’s Sin—Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; 1 John 3:4; Isaiah 59:2; James 2:10;
Jeremiah 17:9.

Lord Jesus Christ—Matthew 16:16b; Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Peter 3:18a;
Revelation 1:18; Philippians 2:9, 10.

The Way of Salvation—Acts 3:19; Acts 11:31; Romans 10:13; John 1 :12; Romans 5 :1; 2
Corinthians 5 :17.

Review

Review is an important part of teaching; we do not really teach unless we review. After teaching an important truth, review it. Ask the children thought-provoking questions about it. Questions and answers give you a good opportunity to assess how much the children have learned, to clear up misunderstandings and to reinforce your teaching. Perhaps you have been singing and explaining a particular song; take time to ask the children about the meaning of certain words.

There are two approaches to review. You can review during the teaching hour, when you review truth which was taught earlier in the program. Or you can review from week to week.

Review can take the form of a quiz—always popular with children! Quizzes are often regarded as the entertaining part of the program. But they should be much more. Quizzes can be a valuable teaching tool provided the questions are based upon teaching that has already taken place. The questions should not all be on the narrative. Ask questions on the truths you have been teaching. For example: why is there no sin in heaven? Why is it wrong to steal? Why did the Son of God become a man? Where did the Son of God live before coming to earth? What does the word “repent” mean? If a child gives a wrong or inadequate answer, use the opportunity to briefly reinforce what you had previously taught.

Doctrine lessons

Some teachers find it helpful to include in some of their classes short five-minute presentations of systematic Bible doctrine. These can be very worthwhile in evangelism, helping the children to understand the doctrinal basis of the Gospel. They should be short, deal with one subject and have ample illustration and application. They should be attractive, and taught in language a child can understand. The following are examples of subjects which might be taught in brief doctrinal lessons:

What is sin? God is holy. Who is Jesus Christ? Why Christ died. Repentance. Faith. Justification. Regeneration.

Missionary stories

From time to time, especially in a regular ministry, it is good to relate examples of how God called, blessed and used missionaries. Missionary biographies can be very interesting and exciting to children. They will show how the missionary came to know the Saviour, and how others came to know Him through the missionary's ministry.

Keep in mind the concept of 60 - minute teaching. This does not mean that you cram so much into the program that the children cannot cope. It does mean that the program is carefully planned; that every part is useful. Remember, each moment is precious!

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Five Test

- (1) What are the five parts of the "whole program"?
- (2) Teach songs which have a (?) Gospel message.
- (3) They may forget much of what is said, but (?) will remain with them forever.
 - (4) We do not really teach unless we (?)
- (5) List three things to keep in mind while teaching Bible doctrine to Children.
- (6) From time to time it is good to relate examples of how God called, blessed and used (?)

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Six

Evangelize through the Bible Lesson

The Bible lesson provides the opportunity to do the most thorough teaching of the message of salvation. But the message of salvation is very extensive, and perhaps you are asking: “What truth should I teach in the Bible lesson?” “Should I try to teach all these truths in every Bible lesson?” “Am I evangelizing if I leave some of these truths out of my lesson?” “Of course it is impossible to teach all the truths of salvation in every Bible lesson! But there must always be “Gospel truth” in your lesson if it is to be an evangelistic lesson. The following principles will guide you as you consider what truths you should teach in an evangelistic lesson.

Teach According to the Natural meaning of the Passage

The responsibility of anyone teaching a passage of Scripture is to teach what that particular passage says. When preparing, pray for an understanding of what God is saying through that portion of His Word. Never use a passage of Scripture to teach truths which it does not naturally teach. Rather, rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

In a regular ministry you will teach different Bible narratives each week. It follows that, as you explain these stories, you will teach different Bible truths. Obviously there will be some overlap, but there is something seriously wrong with your handling of the lessons if you find yourself teaching exactly the same truths week after week!

Basically there are two approaches: you may start with the Bible narrative and teach the truths which emerge from it. Alternatively, you may want to teach a specific truth, so you select a lesson in which this truth is a dominant theme.

Teach as Thoroughly as Possible

The number of truths you can teach in one lesson is limited. It is possible to include many truths and teach none of them; this is totally unsatisfactory. Rather, find out the truth or truths which you are going to teach. Then, as you teach that particular truth, keep to it and whatever must be included in order to explain it adequately. Simplify it, explain it, develop it, apply it and repeat it in your lesson. Keep asking yourself, “Am I teaching this truth in such a way that all the children will know it as they go home?” It is important, as far as possible in every situation, to adhere to good teaching principles. As you look at your Bible lesson and indeed, your whole program, realize that there are truths, or a truth, which you will teach. Others, you will mention without dealing with them in depth: perhaps you have taught them before and you are reinforcing them. Perhaps you find that there are truths which you must mention in order to teach the main truth in the lesson. Others you will omit: they have no relationship with the main truth you are trying to teach, and if you included them it would be difficult for the children to learn the main truth in the lesson.

Teach According to the Time Available

Sometimes you may have five minutes to speak to a group of children, sometimes you are responsible for an entire hour.

A short five minutes' talk certainly necessitates that you attempt to teach only one thing. Get to the heart of your message quickly, use short examples, illustrations and applications.

Adapt to Your Circumstances

Sometimes you speak to a group of children which you will probably never see again. Or, perhaps, you have a regular ministry with the same children week by week. Or, perhaps, you have basically the same children for a limited period. These are very different situations which require very different approaches.

A regular ministry.

If you are teaching basically the same children week by week, this is the ideal opportunity for a teaching evangelism. In each lesson you should teach one main truth, the "central truth." Many of these truths are "Gospel" truths which are directly applicable to unsaved children. Thus over a period of time you will teach the message of salvation comprehensively and in depth.

It is wise to follow a teaching plan which includes lessons from the Old and New Testaments. You could take a Bible character or book, and teach chronologically. For example, if you taught the life of Peter, you might teach as follows:

Lesson _____ Central Truth

The Lord Jesus calls Peter (John 1:35-42; Luke 5:1-11) Follow the Lord Jesus
The Lord Jesus stills the storm (Matthew 14:22-36)..... The Lord Jesus is almighty
Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36) The Lord Jesus is the eternal Son of God
Peter's denial (Mark 14:27-31; 66-72)..... The Lord Jesus knows all things
Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2) God the Holy Spirit changes lives
Peter delivered from prison (Acts 12:1-19) God rules over all

Or you could take a doctrine and plan a series of lessons around it. For example, you could teach about God, and your program might be as follows:

Lesson _____ Central Truth

Creation (Genesis 1, 2) God is almighty
The giving of the Law (Exodus 19, 20) God is holy
Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21) God is just
Jonah (Jonah 1-4) God is everywhere
The crucifixion (Matthew 27:27-41) God is love
Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-19) God is merciful

The following are suggestions of lessons to teach about the Person and work of Christ.

Lesson _____	Central Truth
The changing of water into wine (John 2)	Jesus Christ is God
Jesus, 12 years old, visits the temple (Luke 2).....	Jesus Christ is man
The temptations in the wilderness (Matthew 4).....	Jesus Christ lived a perfect life
The crucifixion (Matthew 27)	Jesus Christ died for sinners
The resurrection (John 20).....	Jesus Christ rose again
The ascension (Acts 1).....	Jesus Christ went back to heaven

All the above truths can be taught with a clear application to unsaved children.

A ‘one-time’ evangelistic meeting

There are often opportunities to reach and teach children in a “one-time” situation. It may be in an open air-meeting, a rally, a beach mission or a children’s day service. Any occasion where you have one single opportunity to speak to children demands thoughtful, prayerful preparation.

What type of lesson should be taught on these occasions? Obviously, if you gathered a group of unchurched children for one open-air meeting, you would not teach them a lesson such as the search for a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24), or the Gibeonites (Joshua 9). These children need very basic teaching. They need to hear about their need, the remedy and how that remedy can be theirs. Not every Bible lesson is suitable for this purpose. Therefore choose a lesson which naturally teaches these truths, a special evangelistic lesson. Lessons which lend themselves to such a simple, clear Gospel presentation include:

- The lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7)
 - Naaman (2 Kings 5)
- The conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-19)
- The brazen serpent (Numbers 21:1-9)
 - Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

It is good that the Gospel is presented in a logical, reasoned way emerging naturally from the narrative. Avoid presenting several truths which have no obvious connection with each other. Often the Gospel lesson will have a special emphasis which will be developed throughout it. This special emphasis is a Gospel truth which unfolds naturally throughout the lesson and so is dealt with more thoroughly than any other truth which may also be part of the lesson. The following are good individual evangelistic messages and each has a special emphasis.

Lesson _____	Possible special emphasis
Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)	Repentance
The Passover Lamb (Exodus 11, 12, 13)	Christ’s substitutionary death
Noah (Genesis 6, 7, 8)	Safety from judgement

The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:16-40) Faith
Nicodemus (John 3:1-18) The new birth

Alternatively you may select a truth which you wish to teach, for example, justification, or the broad and narrow ways. Then build a lesson around the truth, using explanation, illustration and application. Thus your lesson is not one single story through which you teach the Gospel. Rather, you start with the truth you wish to teach, and build up a lesson which is interesting and challenging.

The Wordless Book can be used to bring a simple direct Gospel message. The children's curiosity can be aroused by showing a book with no words and no pictures. Then explain the meaning of each page:

- Gold is for God, the King of kings.
- The dark page is for sin which separates us from God.
 - Red is for the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - White is for justification.
 - Green is for Christian growth.

We should always endeavor to make the most of every opportunity to evangelize, praying that the children will hear words whereby they might be saved.

Whatever approach you take (it is probably best to include both kinds of lesson in a year's program) it is important to plan to teach systematically. Keep a record of the truths you teach, so that you can make sure that you are not teaching a "lopsided" Gospel.

A series of evangelistic meetings

Another type of regular ministry occurs when you have basically the same children for a number of consecutive days, as in a children's mission, a Holiday Bible Club, or a 5-Day Club. These ministries require a careful choice of lessons, so that each lesson has an emphasis on one particular aspect of the message of salvation. And these emphases are related to one another, and together make up a whole. Your lessons for the week might be:

God the Creator Creation (Genesis 1, 2)
The justice of God Noah (Genesis 6, 7, 8)
The love of God Death of Christ (Matthew 27:27-41)
Forgiveness The Lord Jesus and the Paralytic man (Mark 2:1-39)
A changed life Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

Consider the Children's Background and Needs

One teacher may be starting a regular ministry in her neighborhood, to children who are totally ignorant of the Gospel. They have never seen a Bible, they have never heard of Jesus Christ. Another teacher may be involved in open air work among children from a Moslem background. A third teacher may be the guest speaker at a children's service in an evangelical church. All three will evangelize, but their approach will vary. All would have to consider the background of the children. The apostles evangelized in a great variety of situations. They never changed their basic message but always took the people's background into

consideration.

It is important to recognise that when you are commencing a ministry to children who know nothing, you need to “make haste slowly”, choosing your lessons carefully and building your teaching in such a way that you start with the very basic truths. Often you will have to ask yourself, “Have these children misconceptions which must be put right? Have they been brought up in error, which must be corrected? “ You need to think about the words you use. Could they be completely misinterpreted because of the background of the children? The better we know the children, their background and needs, the better we will be able to communicate the Gospel to them.

Teach Many Truths Over a Period of Time

The Gospel is an extensive message and no attempt should be made to reduce it to a minimal formula which we teach to the exclusion of everything else. It is not possible to teach every aspect of the message of salvation at one time to the children. But over a period of time in a regular ministry, endeavor to thoroughly teach the many truths which are part of the message of salvation.

Conclusion

The Bible lesson should be interesting. If it is not, you will teach very little for the children simply will not listen. But it must be more than interesting, it must be instructive. Every Bible lesson should teach the children some Bible truth or truths, and, if possible, should include evangelistic application of that truth.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Six Test

- (1) Never use a passage of Scripture to teach truths which it does not naturally (?)
- (2) What are five things you can do to teach children?
- (3) Should we try to teach all the truths in the Bible at one time, or over a period of time?

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Seven

The Manner of our Evangelism

God has left us in no doubt about the message we must bring to a lost world. The great source book on evangelism, the Bible, makes the message very clear. It does not stop there, however, for it also shows us how we should evangelize. The manner in which New Testament evangelism was carried out is just as striking as its bold, clear message. This is hardly surprising, as it is a known fact that the way in which we present a message conveys a lot about the message. This is true in everyday life. If, for example, your neighbor knocked your door and placidly said, "Excuse me, we think we have lost our little daughter. Perhaps when it is convenient you would help us look for her," you would not be alarmed immediately and hurry to search! If, on the other hand, your neighbor entreated, "Our daughter is lost. Come now and help us find her," you would go to help at once. So it is in evangelism; you communicate a lot by the way in which you bring the message of salvation.

If you teach in a detached manner, with little enthusiasm, apologetically, with little authority or in a light-hearted way, the children will draw their own conclusions about the Gospel. In fact, these approaches are inconsistent with the message we are bringing. What then should characterize the way in which we evangelize?

Seriousness

From beginning to end the Scriptures make it clear that, when a prophet, evangelist or teacher brought a message, there was always a solemn consciousness that it was a message from God. Their approach was never light-hearted; their aim was never entertainment. If there is continuous laughter, it is unlikely that there will be much conviction of sin. In evangelism the issues with which we deal are vital, serious ones; we deal with the never - dying souls of boys and girls. There is a place for humour and laughter, but they should never be dominant.

Let us always be careful to avoid an emphasis on entertainment and fun which will inadvertently convey to children that the Gospel is not to be taken seriously.

Persuasiveness

As Paul preached he was often disputing, discussing and reasoning with his hearers. "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him" (Acts 17:17).

The same word is used in Acts 19:9 and Acts 24:25. It means to present an argument, to present one case against another. By doing so the evangelist is encouraging his hearers to think for themselves and to see that they are wrong. Child evangelists should also be encouraging children to think, obviously on their level. As the Gospel is presented it should be a simple, well-reasoned case.

But his evangelism went a step further. He sought to persuade people. We read in Acts 18:4 about Paul in Corinth: “He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.”

The thought here is that of winning over the hearers. It is not only presenting a well reasoned case, it is more. It is asking “Will you not trust Him;” “Why won’t you believe and be saved?” This same word is translated “persuade” in Acts 26:28; Acts 28:32; and 2 Corinthians 5:11

Perhaps you are teaching a lesson on the broad and narrow way. There should be reasoning and persuasion as you teach: “Think of where the broad way is leading. Think of where you will go if you are on the narrow way. Is it not better to be on the narrow way? Which way are you on? If you are on the broad way, why should you stay on it? Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus “Enter in at the strait, or narrow gate . . . only a few find it. “ What must you do? You must want to leave the broad way. You must trust the Lord Jesus to rescue you from it and to bring you through the narrow gate. Oh, leave the broad way today. Won’t you come to the narrow gate, by coming and trusting Jesus Christ? “

We should ask searching questions as we evangelize. We are not looking for a verbal response but we do want the children to think through the message and its implications. We are endeavoring to convince them that they must be saved. Our manner as well as our message should contribute to this persuasion in our evangelism.

There are other words used to describe apostolic preaching which underline the fact that our approach as well as the content of our message is very important. They warned (Colossians 1:28); they beseeched (2 Corinthians 5:20); they convinced (Acts 18:28). They were not, of course, using human means to get a decision. They were not manipulating the people to obtain an outward response. But everything about New Testament evangelism sought to convince the hearers of the truth of the Gospel, of the utter foolishness of rejecting it, and to persuade people to respond in their hearts to God’s invitation.

Warmth and Concern

The evangelist does not present his message like a history or geography lesson. The message has gripped him, it is part of him and, in a sense, he is part of the message. As he evangelizes he is conscious that there are serious issues at stake. Richard Baxter, an English puritan, had the heart of an evangelist. He said that when he preached, he preached as one who would not preach again; a dying man to dying men. Paul could say to the believers in Ephesus:

“Watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

We can see the same concern in Paul’s reply when Agrippa said that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian: “I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (Acts 26:29). The true child evangelist cannot bring the message in a detached, matter of fact way. His Bible lesson will not be an impersonal presentation. He loves the Gospel message and this is obvious as he teaches. He loves and is concerned for those who listen. He longs that they

would trust the Saviour. This too is seen in his whole approach to children.

This concern will keep harshness out of our evangelism. We will not coldly announce, “If you go on in your sin, you will go to hell.” Yes, we will teach this solemn truth, but with tenderness and entreaty.

Entreaty means “making earnest request”. We should evangelize with a burdened, caring, warm heart.

Urgency

Urgency is that quality in our evangelism which conveys to the children that they must consider the Gospel invitation and that they should do so now. This was certainly evident in New Testament evangelism. People were urged to turn to God at once: “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:7, 8).

“Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (II Corinthians 5:25, 6:2).

Perhaps this is the aspect of evangelism which is in most danger of being lost in work among the young. Children have their whole lives ahead of them and even subconsciously we can adopt the attitude: “They have plenty of time;” or “We’ll sow the seed, there’ll be a harvest when they grow up.” The Bible gives no ground for such complacency in any type of evangelism. Realizing these basic facts: the uncertainty of life; the reality that people can come to Christ only when the Spirit draws them; that God demands prompt obedience, we must sound that note of urgency.

This means that we will try to impress upon children that now is the time to trust the Lord. We will show them their peril. Words like “now” and “today” will be used in our teaching.

This will be especially true as we bring the invitation, often towards the end of the Bible lesson. The end of the Bible lesson should not be merely the tying up of the loose ends of the story, but should include a clear, urgent, concerned challenge to obey God today.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Seven Test

- (1) What is the source book for the Evangelist?
- (2) What are the four things that should characterize the way we evangelize?

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Eight

Make Yourself Available

The child evangelist's main responsibility is to teach the message of salvation as thoroughly as possible. This must include clear explanation of how the children can trust Christ. The teacher should be praying that the Holy Spirit will be working, and that in the quietness of their hearts children will trust the Saviour. Children often do come to Him in repentance and faith, as they sit in a meeting, others have come to Him in their own home. Others having heard the message were apparently unmoved, but in later years came to trust Christ. All of these underline the necessity to teach children how they can come to Christ—this is an integral part of the evangelist's message. But there are other children who need personal help and counseling; and that brings us to a new subject. We are going to consider how the teacher can make himself available to concerned children.

Why make Yourself Available

When you have taught a Bible lesson or closed the meeting, do not assume that your ministry to the children is finished for another week. Personal work and counseling are an important part of the teacher's ministry. Be ready, at all times, to help on a personal basis.

There may be unsaved children listening who want and need help and counsel. The teaching they have received has aroused questions in the children's minds. Some have individual, particular problems with which they need help. Sometimes children from another faith may want to talk on a one to one basis, once or many times, before they are ready to trust Christ. There may be children who are concerned about their sin, but have not grasped the way of salvation and want to know more. Some children are shy, and would never take the initiative in talking about a spiritual problem. For the sake of all these children, it is good that you let them know that you are willing to help them and where they can speak with you.

What it Means to Make Yourself Available

Making yourself available is not part of the message of salvation. This should be very clear in the evangelist's mind, and also evident in his practice. Make sure that there is no confusion in the minds of the children. They should not think that "staying behind" is a necessary step for salvation. You must never give children the impression that they must come to you if they want to be saved.

A child can respond to the invitation without speaking to the teacher. Conversely, waiting behind does not mean that the child will be saved. When you let the children know that they may come and talk with you if they wish, you are simply "opening the door" for them to receive further help—that's all!

How to Make Yourself Available

Be careful

When you make yourself available you are simply giving information to the children. The passion and urgency which should be obvious as you give the invitation will not be present as you tell the children that they can come and talk with you if they wish.

Of course you will be kind and approachable in your manner, but there should be no pressure, no playing on emotions, no use of fear or man's persuasive powers. Remember that children are sensitive and vulnerable, and can be influenced against their will. So you would never say, "I was really disappointed that no one stayed behind last evening" or "Don't go away until you've talked to me about receiving the Lord Jesus. You don't know what will happen when you leave. You might get knocked down by a car on the way home, and then it will be too late." Do not pray in your closing prayer that children will stay behind; rather, pray that children will trust the Lord. Also, it is generally unwise to approach individual children and ask, "Did you think of staying behind?"

Be clear

Specify a certain place where you will meet the child after the meeting. You could say that anyone who wants to talk further should come after the meeting and sit in one of the seats at the front. If a child does, you will know that he wants to talk with you. Or you could say that those who want further help will find you standing by the piano, or by the flannelgraph board. He can come to you there and say, "I want to know more about how to be saved." In a large rally, or at children's camp, you might find it useful to ask concerned children who want to come and talk to go to a particular room when the other children are leaving. Make sure they know where the room is! If you are involved in open air evangelism, you could tell the children that after the meeting you will be standing by a certain tree, and that the children who want to talk should go there. In a small Sunday school class a child could simply stay in his seat when the others have gone.

When you make yourself available, make sure that you go to the place where you said you would be! It is easy to forget this in the hustle and bustle of finishing a meeting, and tidying up afterwards. Also, make sure that other workers know not to come and talk with you at that time.

The children should know exactly what to do if they want further help. Avoid vague statements like, "If you have questions come and talk to me afterwards."

Also it is good to explain the purpose in a child coming to speak to the teacher. You could say, for example, "If you are not saved and really want to know more about how to be . . ."

Or "If you are not saved, and would like to be—but are still not sure how to be—and you would like me to explain it to you, then..." Always emphasis that you cannot save, and that just because a child speaks with you, it does not mean that he is saved.

Be brief

There is no need to labor the point. A few sentences are sufficient to tell the children that you are ready and willing to help. If you keep referring to this throughout the program, it may amount to pressure.

Sometimes people feel that making yourself available in itself is putting pressure upon children. If you are wise and sensitive in how you do it, this will not be the case. You simply “open the door” for counseling, you never try to push children through.

Be personal

Use the word “you”, rather than “someone”, or “all of you” . Each child should know that the teacher is willing to help him. So you would say, “Do you have questions that are bothering you about becoming a Christian...” or “would you like to talk more with me about how to be saved...”

Be varied

Don’t always use the same words at the same time in your program, or it will get to the stage where the children will no longer hear you.

The following are examples of how you might make yourself available:

“If you really want to be saved from sin, but aren’t sure how, I will be glad to talk to you after the meeting and show you from the Bible how you can be saved. I will be standing here beside the piano when the meeting is finished. Come and say, ‘I would like to talk about being a Christian.’ Or “Do you have questions about what you have been hearing here during these last weeks? Those questions are bothering you, and you really want to know the answers. I will be glad to answer your questions. If you want to come and talk, just come and sit in one of the front seats when the meeting is over. Then I’ll know you want to talk with me.”

Or “Do you really want to live for the Lord Jesus, but you don’t know how to come to Him? I will be glad to explain it from the Bible; come and see me. I’ll be standing by that tree when the meeting is over. Remember, I can’t take away your sin. Only the Lord Jesus can do that. But I will be glad to help you understand better how you can come to Him. Just come and sit with me under the tree.”

Offer help to children who have trusted Christ

Children who trust the Saviour on their own, without being counseled, often profit from telling the teacher about this and receiving encouragement. From time to time it is good to say something like this:

“If you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and you have never told me about it, please let me know. I’ll be standing beside the piano after the meeting is finished. I would like to know that you too have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, so that I can pray for you and perhaps help you.”

A talk with the teacher often helps clarify things in the child’s mind. It also helps you to pray for and follow up children.

Have a good relationship with the children

Children will come and talk more readily if they regard the teacher as a friend whom they trust. Build up a good relationship with them by showing interest in each one. Chat with them as they arrive. Have an approachable manner. It is easier to have a good trusting relationship

in a regular ministry, but we should make this our aim in every ministry. In a situation where a teacher has the same small Sunday school class every week, it is important that the children always know that he is available. He does not need to formally say so in each class. He will tell the children that he is available, and from time to time, remind the children about this. But, if the teacher builds the kind of friendship that it is possible to have with children in that situation, they will feel free to come and talk with him whenever they need to. In a single, isolated meeting where you do not have a regular ministry to the children, do not assume that they know they can come and talk with you. You need to tell them so.

When to Make Yourself Available

During the program

You can make yourself available at any time during the program. Usually when there is more than one person involved it is the person who teaches the Bible lesson who makes himself available and counsels concerned children. He may, of course, involve others in counseling if several children need help. The teacher could make himself available after teaching the memory verse. Perhaps the memory verse was Luke 19:10. After you have taught it you might add “Perhaps you know you are lost, and you are very concerned about this. If, at the end of the meeting, you are still not sure how you can be saved, don’t be afraid to come and speak to me, and I will explain it from the Bible. I’ll be standing by the flannelgraph board.”

Perhaps you sang the chorus, “Love, Love, L-O-V-E”. When you sang the third verse (“come, come, c-o-m-e”) you might say, “It may be that you really want to come to the Lord Jesus, but don’t know how. At the end of the meeting you can come and talk with me about it. I’ll be glad to show you from the Bible how you can come to Him. I’ll know that you want to speak with me if you come and sit in a seat in the front row.”

If you were teaching the lesson on Nicodemus you might include something like this: “Nicodemus had many questions, perhaps you are like him. You have been thinking about becoming a Christian. God has been speaking to your heart. But you have questions, or you’re not sure how you can become a true Christian. If you want to talk with me at the end of the meeting, just come and sit in the front row here. I’ll know why you are there and will be glad to talk with you.”

It may be that you have a moment for important announcements during your program. From time to time you may want to mention then that you are available for counseling after the class, and how a child should let you know if he wants to speak with you.

Separate from the invitation

It is essential to keep in mind the clear distinction between two separate and completely different things:

- giving the children the invitation to come to Christ in repentance and faith. This is part of the Gospel message. A child responds to this invitation in his heart when he obeys God. Nothing physical is involved.

- making yourself available to help children who want to come to Christ, but who are not sure how to. This is not part of the Gospel message, but part of your method. Making yourself available is the communication of information to the children. It is not challenge or teaching—it is just letting the children know what they should do if they want help.

These two concepts should be completely separated in our thinking, in our preparation and in our presentation, so that the children also will see them as two completely separate things. So when you are urging children to trust the Saviour, do not make yourself available at the same time. Children can be easily confused, and we don't ever want them to think that we have a part in their salvation. You should never want the children to feel that their coming to you was the same as coming to Jesus Christ. So it is best not to make yourself available at the end of your Bible lesson, if at that time you are inviting children to come to Christ.

When you have taught something

Normally you will not make yourself available until you have done some teaching which may have provoked concern and questions.

Conclusion

There are two extremes we must avoid; Firstly, that of being so zealous to see “results” that we put too much emphasis on telling the children they may come and talk. We can sometimes get to the place where we feel that children cannot be saved unless we have counseled them. We should not in any way give the children the impression, consciously or unconsciously, that this is so, nor should we have the attitude that we would prefer that they talked with us and then trusted the Lord, rather than doing so on their own. Secondly, we can be so cautious that we never let the children know that we are available to help them. So children go on unnecessarily with burdens and questions which one to one conversation, centered on the Word of God, would solve. Sometimes fear of not being able to cope with a counseling situation can make us reluctant to offer this help to children. We should do what we can to prepare ourselves to counsel and depend on the Holy Spirit. We learn such things as counseling by doing them!

Children often need help to understand how they can come to Christ for salvation, and also with the question of assurance of salvation. The counseling time can be very important, when firstly the teacher seeks to lead the child to Christ, and then points him to a verse in God's Word on which he can base his assurance. Many saved children have suffered from this lack of assurance, because no one had ever explained to them personally from the Bible how to come to Christ, and trust God's promises for salvation. Their faith was not based upon a sure word from God.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Eight Test

- (1) Why should we make ourselves available to those we are evangelizing?
- (2) Name five ways we can make ourselves available.
- (3) List two extremes we should avoid.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Nine

The Responsibility for Evangelism

About one-third of the population of every continent consists of children. Most of them are not saved, the vast majority have never been evangelized. Some children are far more privileged than others, they have Christian parents or attend a Christian church. Yet they too need to be evangelized. Every child needs to hear the Gospel.

Evangelizing Children in the Christian Home

In the Old Testament, God intended that His people should teach their own children. They were to be taught the law of God: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gate” (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

The law of the Lord was to have a central place in the home; the children were to be taught it and to be exposed to it constantly. It was to be seen, heard and taught in Jewish homes.

In the New Testament, Paul underlined the parents’ responsibility for the children. “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Christian parents are responsible for the upbringing and teaching of their children. “Nurture” is a general word including all that is involved in rearing a child. “Admonition” refers to spoken instruction. In the Christian home, the general upbringing and instruction should be distinctive. It should be “of the Lord”. This is something which non-Christians cannot do. It is something which believing parents are called to do. The thought that the children are to be brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, should be dominant in the minds of Christian parents. This should be their desire and ambition for their children and their supreme task.

This great responsibility must be carried out by the parents and not passed on to anyone else, be they pastor, Sunday school teacher, relative or day school teacher. It is quite clear from the Bible that the task of teaching children the Word of God and leading them to a knowledge of Christ is primarily the responsibility of parents.

Carrying out this responsibility

Realizing that they have a responsibility to evangelize their own children, believing parents often ask, “How can we do this?” This is a big subject on which we can only give guidelines.

By example

One of the greatest influences in a child's life can be the example of godly parents. Children need to see in the lives of their parents what a true Christian is. Parents should show their children that being a Christian and having communion with God is the most wonderful thing in the world. When they see this, they may long to have that privilege too.

It is important that Christian values permeate every aspect of home life: your relationships with those inside and outside the family, your attitude to work, money and leisure, and so on. Children will soon see that there is a great difference between their home and that of their non-Christian friends.

Children who see this difference will ask questions. This will provide opportunities to explain more of the Christian message.

Parents whose life-style is inconsistent with their profession of faith can be a great stumbling block to their children who often resolve to have nothing to do with the Christian faith.

By answering questions

Children will ask questions like these: "What is God like?" "What happens when you die?" "Why are you praying?" "When will I die?" "Is the Lord Jesus here now?" They ask questions like these, and many less profound ones? It is important to answer these questions, when they are asked, if possible. Answer truthfully, and at their level. Make sure you know the answers and, in a natural way, without preaching at the children, give the information they have asked for.

The Jews were instructed to keep the feast of the Passover and to explain it to their children when they asked what it meant. (Exodus 12:26, 27). Similarly, today children will have lots of questions to ask about Christian worship and practices, for example, the communion service, if they are present. It is good that they see these things, for their questions can provide opportunities to explain more Gospel truth.

By careful instruction

A godly example and honest answers to children's questions must be coupled with careful instruction in the Gospel. Christian parents, like Old Testament Jewish parents, must teach their children diligently. Such instruction should be planned for in the family's normal day. It is good that at some time during the day there should be family worship. A short passage of Scripture is read, a short explanation is given, and a family member prays. During this time, the parents will make sure that various Gospel truths are read, explained and applied to their children.

Also, many parents find it valuable to spend time with each individual child before they go to bed. This too will be a time for teaching. The parent and child may look together at a passage of Scripture, or work together on the child's Bible reading notes.

It is vital that there should be this daily time of teaching in every Christian home, in order that the parents can carry out their God-given responsibility to evangelize their own children.

Of course they should also take their children with them to a local church where they will hear the Gospel preached.

By being available to them on a personal level

When the Holy Spirit is working in the life of a child, that child may well come to his father or mother saying that he wants to be saved. The parent should explain clearly how he can be saved. If the child understands, and is in earnest about trusting the Saviour, the parent can point his own child to Christ. This is a wonderful joy and privilege for any parent to have. But it is good for parents from time to time to let their children know that they should always feel free to come and speak with them concerning any questions or problems they might have. They should also tell the children that if they are not saved and would like to be, but are not sure how, they would always be ready to speak with them personally about this—but at their request only.

Parents should never exert pressure on their children to make a profession of faith. This will do untold damage and lead to disillusionment in later years. Children will sense that their parents long for their salvation, but they must never feel this is something they must do in order to please their parents, or to be sure of their love and acceptance.

Christian parents should surround their children with prayer that God would work in their lives and bring them to know, love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evangelizing Children in the Church

Children of Christian parents will be found in the church, but there will be other children there as well. Often there are the children of parents who attend the church and are not believers. Sometimes children from the neighborhood attend without their parents. All of these children need to be evangelized, and it is obviously the responsibility of the local church to evangelize them. Great care should be taken not to approach these children as if they are Christians, just because they are in the church. If they have not personally trusted Christ as Saviour and Lord, they are not believers and need to be taught the Gospel. There are many opportunities to evangelize them.

Those who teach in the local church have a responsibility to evangelize those who are unsaved, including the young. The main responsibility will fall on pastors and Sunday school teachers.

In church services

It is good that pastors remember that there are children in their congregation. Spurgeon had a constant reminder of this—several rows of orphanage children sat just in front of him. This did not mean that his messages became childish, rather he made sure they were simple. There is no contradiction between simplicity and depth. When the pastor is applying the Gospel, it is good to keep the young as well as adults in mind.

In some local churches a time is set aside for a special children's talk. This provides an ideal opportunity for simple, clear Gospel teaching. It is good that from week to week different aspects of the Gospel are taught and applied in a systematic way.

In Sunday school

Sunday school teachers have the responsibility of making sure that every child in their class knows the Gospel message and how to be saved. It is sad that children can go through Sunday school and learn Bible stories but know little of Gospel truth.

Sunday school teachers should follow a Bible-centered program of systematic teaching, so that the children learn more and more Gospel truth. If they hear the message of salvation expressed in the same terms week after week, they will become hardened to it. But there is no need for this to happen, for the Gospel is an extensive message and as teachers follow a teaching program they will find that each lesson emphasizes a different aspect of it. Teachers should ask themselves, "What truth will I teach to my class this Sunday?" They should have a clear, concise answer to that question so that the children are not only told a story but also taught a truth which is in that story. This truth should then be carefully applied to the unsaved as well as to the saved. When making the applications, the teacher should make it clear to whom he is speaking—to the believing child or to the unbeliever. In the overall programme of Sunday school it is good to include evangelistic songs and memory verses, as well as having songs and Bible verses which will help, encourage and guide the Christian children.

In organizing a Sunday school it is best to divide the children into small groups according to age, if teachers are available to teach these groups. This enables the teachers to adapt the teaching to one particular age group. Also, it is easier for the teacher to build up a good relationship with each child.

Sunday school must endeavor to meet the spiritual needs of the children who attend. There will be some, perhaps many, who have not trusted Jesus Christ, so they need to be evangelised. This is one of the responsibilities of every Sunday school teacher.

In Holiday Bible Clubs and camps

Sometimes churches organize a special week for their children, especially during holiday time. In Holiday Bible Clubs the children come to the church for two hours or more. Games may be organized, followed by refreshments. Then the children have a program of singing, memory work, quizzes and Bible teaching. Finally they are divided into age groups to do handwork related to the Bible teaching. It is important not to teach the children as if all of them were Christians. By all means minister to the believing children, but do bring the challenge of the Gospel to those who are not saved.

If the children are taken away for a weekend camp or a camp week it is important that the Bible teaching is given its rightful place. It should not be a little ten minute message at the end of the day when the children are exhausted. Plan to give plenty of time to the teaching of the Word of God. Think of the spiritual needs of the children and suit the teaching to meet these needs. It is good, too, that each day the children should have a devotional time. This can be done in small groups, each with a counselor. Together they read and learn from a short passage of Scripture. Many children have come to know the Lord through camp. It is a wonderful opportunity for evangelism. It should, however, be remembered that it is easy for children to feel under pressure to be saved, in the whole atmosphere of camp. Care should be taken to avoid this.

Evangelizing Children Outside the Home and the Church

The vast majority of children do not have the privilege of a Christian home and never attend church. They have no contact whatsoever with Christian things. Whose responsibility is it to evangelize these children?

The responsibility of the local church

Christ committed the task of evangelism to his church. In the New Testament, the local church was the center of evangelism. This did not mean that they waited for local people to come in so that they could hear the Gospel. The local church often sent out evangelists. The believers themselves “gossiped” the Gospel to their friends and neighbors.

The responsibility of evangelism, whether it be to old or young, whether it be to the neighborhood or the far flung corners of the earth, is still with the local church. It is primarily the responsibility of the local church to bring the Gospel to the multitudes of children who are still un-reached. The local church can make a real effort through visitation and publicity, to ask some of these children to come to Sunday school or a Holiday Bible Club. When they do come, teachers need to remember that they know little or nothing of the Word of God and so need very basic Gospel teaching. Often churches find it more effective to go to the children, rather than expecting them to come to the church. A church could perhaps, hire a hall or community center in a housing area and have a special children’s mission for the children in that particular area. When the children come it is vital that they hear basic Gospel teaching with a clear challenge to trust the Lord Jesus Christ. For some of these children this might be their only contact with the Gospel. But it is much better that they have that contact than have none at all. Some of the children reached in this way can be channeled into the Sunday school.

There are other ways for the church to reach unreached children. Perhaps the most effective is the Good News Club.

This is a weekly meeting for children held in a home. The children from the neighborhood often come into a home more readily than into a church building. In the home they are taught by volunteer teachers. The program consists of singing, memory work, a quiz, some teaching on missionary work and a Bible lesson. The Bible teaching is systematic; each year the children are taught some lessons from the Old Testament and some from the New. The local church prays for this outreach, provides the people to lead it, and sometimes provides the finances for the visuals used. Often this has been the means of channeling children, and eventually their parents, into the local church.

In the summertime 5-Day Clubs can be organized. These are open air children’s meetings—held on five consecutive days on a green, in a park or anywhere children can be found. This is a good way to reach children in areas where there are no homes available for Good News Clubs. The program includes singing, memory work, competitions and Bible teaching. This is an excellent way to reach children who might not otherwise ever hear the Gospel. Obviously it is the kind of ministry which can be carried out by a local church.

Another way to reach children is that of tract distribution. On special festivals or

holidays, in shopping centers and fun fairs, there are often many, many children. Teams can distribute children's tracts. It is good to make sure that the tract is attractive, and that it clearly explains the way of salvation.

The responsibility of children's organizations

God has raised up several organizations and missionary societies which aim to reach unreached children. One of these is Child Evangelism Fellowship. Child Evangelism Fellowship endeavors to help and work with the local church to reach unreached children. Its different outreaches can be, and often are, organized by a local church. There are, however, many places where there is no local church to reach the children, or where the local church is not doing so. Child Evangelism Fellowship feels a sense of responsibility to reach these children too. Where the children are not being reached, Child Evangelism Fellowship itself organizes 5-Day Clubs, Good News Clubs and other outreaches. It also provides training for those involved in 5-Day Clubs and Good News Clubs, whether they are church based or directly organized by the Fellowship.

It is important to see that there are still multitudes of children who are unevangelized. It is easier to reach them now, than when they are older, so it is an urgent task. Like Paul, we need to be prepared to make a real effort to reach out, "that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Nine Test

- (1) How many children should we strive to evangelize?
- (2) Who is responsible for the upbringing and teaching of the children?
- (3) List four ways we can evangelize our own children in the home.
- (4) List four places we can Evangelize children.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Ten

Essentials for the Children's Evangelist

An extrovert personality, wittiness, liveliness, artistic ability, a good story teller, a sense of humor—no, these are not the primary qualifications of those who are involved in bringing the message of salvation to children. God uses all kinds of personalities in this ministry. He uses people who are very capable and those who have little natural ability. But every child evangelist, whether he be a Sunday school teacher teaching four children, or a missionary teaching several hundred, has certain basic qualifications.

Many of us will be conscious that these qualities are not present in our lives to the extent that we would wish. We need to keep praying that they will be more and more evident in our lives and ministries.

Vision

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:11, 12).

This is God's verdict on mankind, including the children. But we find it difficult to see children as God sees them. We are so prone to see them naturally rather than spiritually. We look on them as innocent, fun-loving, carefree, mischievous. But we need vision to see them as eternal souls. We need to think, long and often, over what God has told us about them in His Word, so that we will see them through God's eyes, and not our own.

Compassion

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Our God is “full of compassion”, and we His ambassadors need that compassion. The Lord Jesus possessed this quality completely and perfectly. When He saw a crowd He understood and was deeply concerned about their spiritual needs. When He saw an individual need, for example, that of the Samaritan woman, His reaction was the same (John 4:4). The word “compassion” used in Matthew 9:36 is a strong one, meaning that He was moved to the depths of His being.

Children recognize this love; this is a language which they all understand. The children who were brought to Christ (Mark 10:13-16), sensed His compassion and readily consented to being in His arms. When He needed a child as a visual aid in Matthew 18:1-14, the little one came to Him. Children recognized the compassion of the Saviour, it drew them to Him. It will have similar results when that divine compassion is evident in our life and ministry. This is not something we have naturally, or can work up. We must depend on the One who is “full of

compassion” to fill us, so that we really care and are concerned about the children we teach. Guard against professionalism which is content to have a good, sound, attractive programme. Love for the children must always be at the heart of your work. Our ministry is that of compassionate evangelism.

Prayer

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved”
(Romans 10:1).

Prayer-less evangelism will be barren, powerless evangelism. We need to pray earnestly for God’s guidance as we prepare, so that the message we bring will be from Him. We need to pray that the Holy Spirit will bathe our words with power. It is important to pray for the children—for individual children and their needs. Evangelism is a battle, but in many senses, the victories are won in secret as the evangelist prays. Be as conscientious in talking to God about the children, as you are in talking to the children about God.

It will prove a real blessing in your ministry if you involve others in praying for you and for the children you teach. Try to enlist several other people—perhaps elderly people who feel they can no longer be actively engaged in evangelism. With these, “helping together by prayer”, you will be encouraged, strengthened and blessed.

Passion

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Paul felt a deep burden for lost souls; this moved him to preach with all his heart. Passionate preaching is the outworking of a compassionate heart. Being very conscious in his heart of the lost condition of children, the child evangelist will have a sense of urgency in his ministry. He will be burdened for the children to whom he brings the Gospel, which he knows is the only answer to their need. He will never bring the message in a detached matter of fact manner, but will urge his hearers to obey God today. God alone can give this passion and will do so as the evangelist meditates on the glory of God, the plight of mankind and God’s plan of salvation.

Wisdom

“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

The child evangelist needs wisdom in his choice of words, so that children will understand the message. He needs discernment to recognize what is merely human and what is the work of the Spirit. Children are so impressionable and pliable, he needs wisdom so that he does not violate the personality of the child. He needs to know how to urge children to come to Christ. He needs to know how to avoid pressure in his evangelism. These, and a lot more, require wisdom.

Power

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:4, 5).

Sometimes this is misunderstood and we get the idea that powerful preaching or teaching is loud, forthright oratory, but this is not necessarily so. A teacher can be quiet spoken and rather shy, and yet speak with power and authority. Powerful evangelism is when the Holy Spirit controls and guides what the evangelist says. This power is essential. The Lord Jesus Christ told the disciples that the Holy Ghost would give them power (Acts 17:8). He is the Source of powerful, authoritative teaching. We cannot work it up, we cannot create it, but we should be dependent on the Holy Spirit to give us the power and authority we need.

Perseverance

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2).

At times we can work for weeks or longer and seem to be getting nowhere. In a regular ministry with children we need “stickability”, being content to leave the outcome with the Lord of the Harvest. Sometimes we are the last link in the chain which brings a child to Christ. Sometimes we are the first link or an intermediate one. Results or lack of them should never be a deciding factor. God is looking for child evangelists who will be faithful and persevering, no matter what happens.

May God raise up many evangelists who possess these qualities to bring the Gospel to boys and girls around the world.

Youth Evangelism 202

Lesson Ten Test

- (1) Please write a brief message highlighting the main things you have learned from this lesson.

- (2) Throughout this lesson, has God challenged you to change some things you are doing now, or to start or become more involved in youth ministries?

- (3) If so, please outline what you feel God has been telling you.