

HIS CHILDREN

PUBLISHED BY THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY OF CALVARY CHAPEL OF COSTA MESA

From My Heart ...

There are times when we can overlook what the Lord is doing in our lives as we are involved with teaching the children. It's such a blessing to be able to share of God's goodness, His mercy, His grace and so many other truths about Him.

How important is it for the children to understand that the Bible is the Word of God in such a way that when the Bible speaks, God speaks.

Isn't it awesome when you consider the truths we are able to teach; that the ultimate aim of studying the Bible is to know God? And to be

able to ask questions such as "Do you want to know God intimately?" And to share Scriptures such as Proverbs 8:34-35:

"Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My doors, waiting at My doorway. For whoever finds Me finds life and receives favor from the Lord."

To be able to share with the children that if they want the blessings spoken of in this Scripture, they need to "watch daily" at the doors of Scripture.

Isn't it our desire to make an impact on the lives of the children that are in our classes? May we not forget then, that first the

Scriptures must have an *impact* on our lives.

After the Lord has shown us the Scriptures He wants us to share in class, do we find ourselves saying, "Great! That's just what they need to hear for their lives." Yes, it is good to hear from the Lord and to share, but if that's the approach we take, we may *miss* the many *blessings* God intends for us. We need to ask questions concerning our own lives, such as "Lord, what do you want me to know? And, "How would this work in my life?"

May we "watch daily" at the doors of Scripture so our Lord can guide and direct us in the directions He desires to take our lives.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU ...



Sunday Morning Second Service Children's Ministers

(Note: There are other faithful servants who were unable to attend this photo session.)

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ACTIVITIES AND NEEDS ...

March 16	<p><u>Children's Ministry Seminar</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and special speakers will encourage and equip you in your ministry to children! Flyers and sign-up forms are in the CM Office. A "don't miss" event! • Those desiring to help set up and/or clean up, please sign up in the CM office.
June 23	<p><u>Children moving to the next grade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be the first week with your new class!
June 24-28 July 1-5	<p><u>Junior Camp</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children entering 4th through 6th grades at Calvary's beautiful Youth Camp! A great time for drawing closer to the Lord through Bible study and other fun camp activities!! If you have children in this age range, please pray about their participation. • June 24-28 is for campers attending Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. • July 1-5 is for campers from other Calvary Chapels and affiliates. • Please pray about serving as a Camp Counselor -- it's a blessing you will treasure!! Sign up in the CM Office.

A Call To Prayer ...

"What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and grief to bear. What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer ..."

What truth lies in the words of that familiar hymn! Jesus is indeed that friend who wants to carry our burdens and give us His rest. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ..." the Lord says in Matthew 11:28. He will give us His rest, but we need to go before Him! One can't help but recall the following verses from 1 John 5:

¹⁴ *And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us:*

¹⁵ *And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."*

One of the words that jumps out of these verses is "confidence." Have you ever decided not to ask someone for something for fear or concern that the answer would be "no"? Have you ever withheld a question because you believed that the person you were asking would think the question is "foolish"? If you have, then you certainly did not have confidence. God wants to assure us and wants us to have that great confidence in Him. He wants us to know it to such an extreme that we are promised that each time

we pray according to His will He hears us and that we have the petitions we have asked of Him. What a promise!!

It is such an encouraging promise that several teachers within the Children's Ministry have shared their classroom experiences and ideas regarding prayer:

A fourth grade teacher shared with his class that prayer to God is a lot like talking to your best friend on the telephone. The teacher asked the children if they thought God is on the other end of the line. While they realized He's not, the teacher explained that mouthpiece should remind them of talking to God. When asked how to talk to God, the children responded with the word "pray". The class also talked about the earpiece and they were reminded to *listen* to God. They were then taught about listening to God through His word. In addition, the teacher often had the children sing the song "Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day" as a reminder. At that point, the class is led in prayer and the children were encouraged to individually pray for their needs. What a great way to remember and relate to prayer! Think about that the next time you're on the phone.

Two first grade teachers related that prayer is a regular part of their class -- each teacher takes a group

to a corner of the room for prayer. In each small group, the children are encouraged to share their prayer requests with the group and, if they are willing, they are encouraged to personally pray to the Lord. The teachers also shared that Jesus' words out of John 11:41 are important when he said "Father I thank You that You have heard Me" because the verse reminds us that God hears our prayers and we can thank Him just as Jesus did. One sixth grade teacher shared the importance of *individual* prayer in the classroom. Acts 2:42 mentions four steadfast activities of the early church: they continued in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. As a result of this emphasis, each child is encouraged to pray for individual needs or for the needs of a classmate.

"Dad, can I pray for you?" is a quote a dad shared with his son's Sunday School teacher. Evidently dad returned home from work one day that week feeling that he was coming down with the flu. As he sat down after warning his family to say away lest they catch it also, his son walked over to him, put his little hand on the dad's shoulder and prayed for him! Bearing one another's burdens! How exciting it is to see children have that confidence in prayer to put it into action!!

ANNECDOTES ...

A Joyful Noise ...

The sound of children's voices echoed from the courtyard below. There was excitement in Room 202 as members of the Sunday Evening Children's Ministry worship team were busy making preparation for worship -- as the Psalmist said in Psalm 28:7 "...And with my song I will praise Him."

The center of the room was cleared. Microphones were adjusted to just the right height, the sound check went great! There was an excitement about this evening -- it wasn't just any Sunday Evening -- it was Christmas Eve! It was *special!*

Before worship began, the approximately fifty children were reminded that although they may give and receive gifts, God's gift to

the world nearly two thousand years ago is the only eternal gift!. Everyone was reminded that they were gathered that evening to rejoice and celebrate God's wonderful and eternal gift to the entire world -- Jesus Christ.

After prayer, the wonderful sound of familiar Christmas carols filled the room -- favorites such as, "*O Holy Night*", "*Hark The Herald! Angels Sing*," and "*Away In The Manger*" Some of the children [and adults] closed their eyes as they lifted their voices to the Lord!

The first stanza of "*Angels We Have Heard On High*" was strong, the chorus vibrant. As the second stanza began, it sounded as if someone had forgotten to change the batteries in a cassette player, "*Shepherds, shyyyy hum haaa humm*"

Undaunted, the worship leaders instructed "Let's go to the next page." As they started to sing "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*", it seemed that the sound system problem had gone away. As the fourth stanza began, however, "*The hopes and fears ... eh ehhh*". Yes folks, it happened again!

Calmly, the instruction came: "Turn to the next page." As Paul tells us in Romans 8:28 "*And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*". The worship time ended magnificently and gloriously as perfect peals of "*Little Drummer Boy*" filled the room.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN ...

David tells us in Psalms 139:14 "*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.*" Each child that God has placed in your class is indeed special and is growing at his or her own pace -- some may be readers, or writers, or paper cutters, some more expressive and creative.

For children eight to nine years old, this can be a time of tremendous spiritual, intellectual, and social growth. Children in this age group understand God's nearness and can worship Him. Prayer, worship, and study of God's Word can be deep and spontaneous. Finding volunteers for reading short passages will not be a problem. Understanding deeper concepts and developing a knowledge of God's attributes are beginning at this time as well. Children are also separating themselves -- boys with boys, girls with girls. Each gender works well together as a team.

The following are some thoughts for those who minister to this age group:

- * There are those who enjoy coloring, but most enjoy word searches and game pages during the sign-in times.
- * This is a great age for crafts because of their eagerness and ability.
- * The importance of prayer is understood and respected.
- * This age can be readily encouraged to memorize scripture which is an excellent way of planting His Word in their hearts.
- * There will be those who would love to volunteer to read a verse or two.
- * At this age, visual aids are limitless. They enjoy flannelgraphs, flash cards, live drama, filmstrips, and videos supporting the Bible study.
- * This age still enjoys younger age worship songs, but they are wanting to sing adult worship songs as well.
- * They love team games which support the Bible study.

Let us be sensitive to each child's needs which includes that need to be loved and to be secure in that love. God wants to reveal His love to each child through *you*. As Jesus said in Matthew 19:14 "*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*"

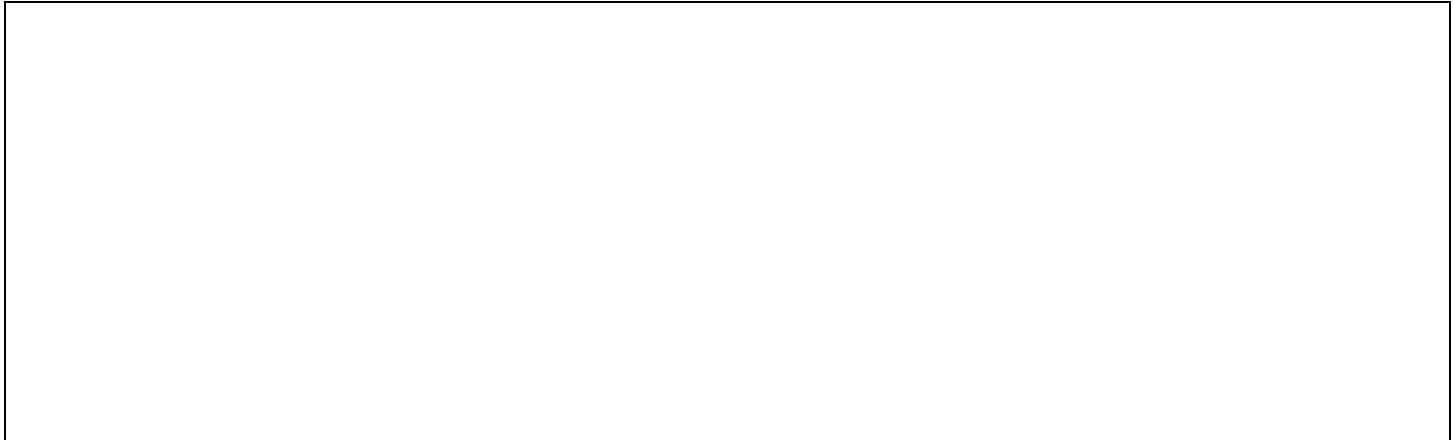
More ANECDOTES ...

A Servant's Heart

You often have no idea of the kinds of things that the children in our classes may be going through. But as you minister God's love to the children week after week, you exemplify Jesus' words when He said, "... *inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.*" Matthew 25:40. The Lord has indeed given each of you that servant's heart to minister to His children. Ministering to children goes beyond the telling of a Bible story or getting the children involved in a Bible game; it includes the giving of yourself. Your willingness to soothe a hurt feeling or to show compassion for illness in a child's family or among friends will have that long lasting impact on a child beyond the classroom.

On Christmas Eve, a young boy was dropped off with the other children. This young boy, however, was running around and refused to join the others for worship. Something was troubling him, but what? One of the teachers present decided to minister to this troubled young boy. The young boy resisted but the teacher continued to speak and sing to him. Eventually the young boy began to sing and share with this teacher. God's love had softened a troubled heart! As the children prepared to leave later in the evening, it was revealed that the young boy had been hurting because his dad had been fatally shot earlier that week. The Lord will use each of you just as He used this children's minister because of your willingness to serve and give of yourselves.

More GETTING TO KNOW YOU ...



Sunday Morning Third Service Children's Ministers

(Note: There are other faithful servants who were unable to attend this photo session.)

**CALVARY CHAPEL OF COSTA MESA
3800 S. FAIRVIEW RD.
SANTA ANA, CA 92704**



Creative Storytelling Seminar

[Making God's Word Come Alive In The Hearts Of The Children!]

On Saturday, February 3rd it rained. I couldn't think of a better time to be indoors with warm coffee, friends, sweet desserts and listening to stories. Well, sort of ... The Children's Ministry again held a fun and informative training seminar to equip all of us in the art of storytelling, but not just any story -- THE stories -- the ones found in God's word! If there was one point that hit home for me it was that we have an awesome privilege and responsibility to tell these stories to our precious little ones -- to tell the stories in a way that they can grasp the *spiritual* and *personal* message. I was inspired!

We reviewed the importance of preparation. So often I sell the kids and myself short by not putting as much time as I could into the preparation. I have been so humbled in this ministry like never before. I realized that the

more I study and prepare, the more there is to study and prepare. I am growing and learning, too. We are called to share the Word of God, to impart the truth, wisdom, and teaching of the Scriptures to the children through the power of the Holy Spirit. Proverbs 22:6 tells us: "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*" We children's ministers are part of this training too!

We next were shown or participated in examples of presentation techniques: the various facial expressions one can use was demonstrated by "volunteers" showing us their *mad*, *loving*, and *looking* faces. This was quite funny and we were thoroughly amused!!

We were also given a demonstration in puppetry! We learned to maintain the integrity of our puppet characters by not carrying them into the room by

their hair. We also were taught the fine art of hand motion. Remember folks, keep the puppet's head from bobbing up while making sure the mouth opens downward by jutting the hand forward while speaking. [Easier said than done!]

One children's minister told us the story of Jonah in such an animated and inspired way, revealing that with spiritual guidance, preparation, simple props and personal enthusiasm, the stories can come alive for us all!!

We also watched a short video of one man's storytelling talents -- again, an awesome "performance." Many of us were teary-eyed!

We later broke into four groups with each group assigned to present a pre-written story. Each group had only about 10 minutes to prepare but the

presentations were well done and educational for us all!

Once again, I am grateful for the faithfulness of those in the Children's Ministry who made this day possible. The spiritual insight and practical training shared this day will do much to increase the Kingdom of God.



[If you missed the above seminar, please don't miss the upcoming daylong seminar -- you will be blessed!! Details on other side.]