

No. 52

THE MINI MAG

FOR CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Assisting
Children's
Evangelists
Worldwide

Devotional

BEHOLD YOUR GOD

The first and most important responsibility for the believer is to know what God is like. The quality of our lives, our prayers, and our ministries is determined by our concept or knowledge of God. God gave us His Word, the Bible, mainly to show us what He is like. Many believers have a wrong picture of God and that has caused them problems. Therefore, when we study a passage of Scripture, the first question we should ask ourselves is "What does this passage teach me about God?" For example, the well-known book of Jonah is not primarily about Jonah. Its main function is to give us a picture of God and His attributes. What truths about God can we learn from our study of that book?

GOD IS PERSISTENT (Chapter 1) God commanded Jonah to go to Ninevah and preach God's message, but Jonah disobeyed. What does God do when His servant doesn't do what He commands? There are two possibilities. Firstly, He could choose someone else to go or, secondly, He could work with the person until he repented and obeyed. It was this second possibility which God used with Jonah. He persisted with him. He sent a storm, and He sent a fish. God had determined that Jonah would go to Ninevah.

Is it possible, dear reader, that you are in the same disobedient situation as Jonah was? May God persist and send whatever storms and fish are necessary to bring you to repentance.

GOD IS PRESENT (Chapter 2) Jonah was now inside the fish; but the greater miracle is that God's presence is also in the fish. He had not abandoned the disobedient prophet. He was present and He was there with him, ready to hear his voice when he prayed. As a result, God spoke to the fish and Jonah was thrown onto the dry land.

Isn't it wonderful to have a God Who never leaves us, a God Who is always present with us, even in our darkest hours and strangest places, and ready to listen to us when we talk to Him.

GOD IS POWERFUL (Chapter 3) And so Jonah went to Ninevah and preached God's message of repentance and forgiveness (perhaps using himself as an example!). We now see the greatest demonstration of God's power. The whole city repented and turned to God. This had not happened before, nor has it happened since.

God is still powerful and still able to save the most sinful, and He wants to use you and me, as He used Jonah, to accomplish His plans and purposes.

GOD IS PATIENT (Chapter 4) But Jonah, instead of being thankful that the city had repented, was angry. "I just knew you would do that and make me look silly. What I told them would happen, has not happened". What did God do



We welcome you this month with a beautiful little poem written by Joanna Fuchs. You could substitute "Good News Club teacher" for "Sunday school teacher" if you wish.

*Thank you, Sunday school teacher
for opening my eyes
to the Bible and to Jesus
life's most precious prize.*

*Thank you, special teacher
for opening my mind
to God and the Holy Spirit
and for answers you helped me find.*

*Thank you, Sunday school teacher
for opening my heart
to eternal life through salvation
the precious lessons you impart.*

*Thank you, cherished teacher
for giving me advice
so that I can know the Lord
and be with Him in Paradise.*

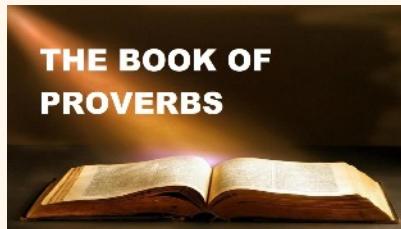
with Jonah? Did He rebuke him or punish him for his lack of love and his anger? No! He was patient with him and used a visual to teach him not to be angry.

Isn't it a blessing to have a God Who is patient with us. Think of what would have happened to us if he had not been patient.

Make it your first goal when reading and studying a passage of Scripture to discover some truth about God in the passage.

There are two words which appear time and time again in Proverbs, (the “book of true statements”). The first of these is the word “wisdom” which appears many times right through the book. Wisdom in Solomon’s eyes is “the ability of the mind to understand life in all its parts from God’s perspective.” Or, put more simply, it is “the ability and desire to make the right decisions in all situations”. These decisions cover all parts of life and ministry. Solomon’s desire is that all, both young and old, should desire wisdom, seek it and find it. So, he encourages all his readers to “get wisdom” (chapter 4:5) because “it is better than gold” (chapter 16:16) and results in life and God’s blessing (chapter 8:32-33) The person who is truly wise will trust in God. The second key word is “son.” which Solomon uses fifty times in his book. We saw last month that “son” is an inclusive word and that it can refer to adults, or young men, or teenagers, or children according to the context where it is used, or it can simply refer to everyone, including children. His use of the word “son” portrays Solomon as a “father” giving guidance and help to his children of all ages and encouraging ALL OF THEM to be WISE.

In our studies we will look for verses or passages which, in their context, seem to be addressed specifically to children, or express truths about them and our ministry to them.



Proverbs 1:4, 8,9 Right at the beginning of the book, Solomon gives his reasons for writing it, and in verses 4 and 5, he outlines four groups which he wants to minister to, and which he wants to receive knowledge and wisdom through his ministry. Groups 2,3 and 4 are young men and older men. But the first group are called “the simple”. Could we not conclude from the use of the word “simple,” and the fact that they come first in order before the young men, that they are “children”, and that Solomon wants them to have “prudence” or “wisdom”. Verses 8 and 9 give

a practical example of a father and mother teaching a child who is one of the “simple” in verse 4. So, he believes it is necessary for simple children to be taught how to receive wisdom, and therefore to be “wise unto salvation”.

Proverbs 2:1-9 The father like way he, in verse 1, addresses “his son,” and the way

the son is listening to his father’s words and commands, seem to portray a father speaking to a young son starting out in life and open to the simple guidance for his future as contained in verses 3 -9. Reading these nine verses give the reader a strong impression that a father is speaking to his young son. If so, Solomon is sure that his young “son” can understand the fear of the Lord, find the knowledge of God (verse 5) and receive wisdom from God (verse 6). And what a wonderful picture these verses give us of what God wants us to teach our children, so that they might be wise, fear the Lord and come to know Him.

-Q&A KEY QUESTIONS ASKED BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: I believe, like you, that the best way to teach a Bible lesson is to teach the central truth found in the scripture passage and apply it in two ways –to the saved and the unsaved children. My question is “Should I use this method in every situation?”

Answer: The quick simple answer is “No”. This method is the best method in a regular teaching situation where you have the same children coming to your class or club each week. This is the teaching situation for the vast majority of teachers. So, this is, or should be, be, the best method for them to use. It allows the teacher to teach Bible truths in more depth and one at a time. It also enables him to link these truths together from week to week. But a teacher can be in a different situation, which requires him to ADAPT his method to that situation. His basic gospel message will not change, but to be an effective teacher IN THAT SITUATION, he might have to change his method of teaching. There are several factors which could require such adaptation.

1) The time available Shortage of time could require you to be shorter in your narrative and more selective in your teaching. You may need to cut down a little on the teaching of your central truth but still mention other truths which are linked to it.

2) The needs of the children. If the children are all saved, you could leave out the application to unsaved children; if the children are all unsaved you could leave out the application to the saved children and teach a purely evangelistic lesson.

3) The circumstances. If you have one opportunity to speak to a group of children, it would be best for your lesson to be completely evangelistic and concentrate on the unsaved children. You could then have two possibilities.

a) You could choose a Bible story which is thoroughly evangelistic and use it to teach a special evangelistic lesson which enables you to teach (as well as possible) three gospel truths – “You need to be saved because...You can be saved because...You will be saved if.... “This is not the ideal teaching situation because you are not able to teach these truths thoroughly.

But it is a way which is determined by your circumstances.

b) Another way would be to use a series of eight flashcards with each card using words and a picture to outline the truth you want to teach and apply. This method can be very effective even though it does not, in these circumstances, use the central truth/double application method. It is just an eight-step logical teaching of one Gospel truth. (with other truths mentioned where helpful). It is a method which I favour very much and have used it in such a situation. Another situation which needs adaptation is when you are conducting a series of five meetings in a five- day club with basically the same children each day. You could choose a subject for each day—God, Sin, Jesus Christ, Faith and Salvation. Then choose a bible story, for each day, to enable you to introduce the children to that day’s central truth. And be sure to link all 5 presentations together.

OBEDIENCE BRINGS LIGHT AND GIVES BLESSING

Last month we saw our responsibility to help our saved children to be lights in the darkness which surrounds them. We need to help them to understand what God expects from them in their Christian lives, and what they need to do to generate and to brighten that light.

(**Sample outline**) "I am so glad that some of you have asked the Lord Jesus to come into your lives and to be your Saviour. You are now a new person. God has given you a new nature. God now wants you to show to other people that you are a new person by the things you do and by the things you say. He wants you to be "a light shining in the darkness of this world." The key word for a boy or girl who wants not only to shine but to shine brightly is **OBEY**. You know what that word means. But you also need to know who you are to obey. It means that when that "someone" asks you to obey his commands, you should do so. You should always do what that "someone" tells you to do. And your obedience causes your light to shine. Who is this "someone" who you must obey? There are several answers.

► The most obvious and clearest answer is **GOD HIMSELF**. Your first and most important **DUTY** is to **OBEY GOD** and to do what He says. How can you know God's commands and what He wants you to do. They are all written down in this book the Bible. He wants you to read it or listen to me and others as we read it, and when you find His commands, you should read them



and **OBEY** them, and He will give you the strength to do so. For example, when God commands you in the Bible not to tell lies, and you tell the truth, your light shines. **YOUR FIRST DUTY IS TO OBEY GOD.**

► The second "someone" is your **PARENTS**. The only verse in the Bible which is addressed directly to children is a direct command to saved children. "Children **OBEY** your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honour your father and mother" and God promises that if you do so "it may be well with you. and you may live a long time on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-2) This direct command to saved children is repeated in Colossians 3:20 with the added fact that if you do so "it will be well pleasing to the Lord." Also, if you obey your parents your light shines. **YOUR SECOND DUTY IS TO OBEY YOUR PARENTS**

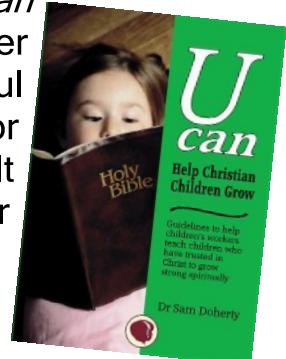
► Two other "someones" you **HAVE A DUTY TO OBEY** are your **TEACHERS** at school and your **LOCAL POLICEMAN** when they tell you to do something, or not to do something. When you obey them, your light will shine.

THE MORE YOU FULFIL AND OBEY THESE FOUR DUTIES THE MORE YOUR LIGHT WILL SHINE, THE MORE YOU WILL BRING GLORY TO GOD AND THE MORE YOU YOURSELF WILL BE BLESSED.



Six months ago I recommended a book which would help you in your ministry to saved children. I would like to recommend it again because it can be of great help to you. It is entitled "*U-can Help Christian Children to Grow*." In its over 100 pages you will find helpful guidance and instruction for every aspect of that ministry. It is available free of charge at our website

www.cefbookministry.com





ILLUSTRATIONS FOR SAVED CHILDREN

1) It was a hot sticky day in Africa. Philip, the young son of the missionary who lived and worked there was playing in the shadow of a big tree. Suddenly he heard his father call sharply "Philip, do exactly what I say—get down on your stomach". Philip obeyed at once and dropped to the ground. "Crawl as fast as you can towards me" ordered his father. The boy crawled as fast as he could. When he was halfway to his father, his father said, "Stand up now and run the rest of the way". Quickly the child scrambled to his feet and ran to his father. "Now turn round and look at the tree," said his dad. When Philip looked, he saw that there was a 15-foot snake dangling down from the branch under which he had been playing. His quick obedience to his father had saved his life.

If you are not a Christian, **OBEY** the Lord Jesus and trust Him as your Saviour. But you must do what He tells you to do in His Word. If you are a Christian, the Lord Jesus wants you to **OBEY** Him and live for Him each day. He also wants you to **OBEY** your parents, and your schoolteacher, and, as you do so, God will bless you.

2) A little boy entered a shop which had a notice in its window which said, "Boy wanted." He told the shopkeeper he would like

to apply for the job. The shopkeeper thought he would be too weak for the work, but he asked him "Well my lad. What can you do?" "I can do what I am told." The boy replied. His answer so pleased the shopkeeper that he said, "You'll do my boy!" That's the kind of response the Lord Jesus wants from us. "I will do what you tell me to do. Lord Jesus."

3) If you have asked the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour, you have two natures. You have the new nature which the Lord Jesus has given you. This nature will always want you, and help you, to obey Him and do what He tells you to do. But your old nature is still there, and it encourages you not to obey the Lord Jesus. The old Indian chief who had trusted the Lord Jesus was trying to explain to several young braves this struggle which believers have in their lives. He said "It is like two dogs fighting inside of us. There is one good dog who always wants to do the right thing and obey his master; and there is the other dog who always wants to do the wrong things and disobeys. Sometimes the good dog is stronger and is winning the fight; but sometimes the bad dog is stronger and is winning."

"Who is going to win in the end?" asked one of the young braves. The chief answered wisely "The one you feed" If you have trusted the Lord Jesus be sure to "feed" your new nature, your new man, with the Word of God. The more you study God's word and apply it to your life, the more strength you will have to win the struggle, to defeat your old nature and to obey the Lord Jesus when He speaks to you.

74 Years and Still Learning:

The author's experience and the lesson he learned

IT'S GOOD TO LAUGH AT YOURSELF

One of the most important lessons I have learned when working with children and young people (and also with adults) is that it is essential to have a sense of humour. I wrote about this several months ago. It is good to smile, and it is good to laugh. But we must also learn to laugh when the joke is on us. Young people appreciate a teacher who can "take it" as well as "give it." I was teaching (with translation) a large group of people in Poland. Most of them were young people. During my rather long teaching session I told them a joke, and no-one laughed. For some reason there was no response. So, I made another joke out of it and told them that I understood that it took 24 hours for Polish young people to understand a joke. They laughed at that. The next day I was teaching the same group, when suddenly right in the middle of my teaching, they all started to laugh at the same time. I was confused. What made them laugh? When the laughing died down, I asked them "What is so funny? Why did you laugh?" and they replied, "That joke you told yesterday was so funny." I looked at my watch and it was exactly 24 hours since I told that joke!!! Now the joke was on me! On another occasion I was teaching a class of students at our Training Institute. I joked them that I always knew if they were listening to me by looking at their eyes, and they laughed. When they walked in to take their seats for the next class, they were all wearing sunglasses. And I laughed. The joke was on me again.

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Administrator of the ACEW Trust, and Kenneth Martin, Chairman of the ACEW Trust.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's over 70 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at www.CEFBookMinistry.com.