Thank you so much for purchasing Vintz and his curriculum! It is with great joy that I send him to you. Let me tell you a little about him before I go on to anything else.

Vintz’s name is derived from Vintner (one who makes wine) and he lives inside a barrel, which is where his wine is made. He was designed to be a way to introduce children (and adults) to the joy and pleasure of the Lord. Here at Bethel Church, where Vintz came from, he is often taken out in public to minister to the children of Redding at Sidewalk Sunday School (as well as inside the church). Children come from all over our city and learn from Vintz, and so do some of their parents. Some of the terminology commonly used to communicate the joy of the Lord can be very offensive to a parent with small children (i.e. “let’s get drunk”). It is our heart’s desire to reach out to the children in our city and church, as well as to their entire families. Proverbs 17:19 says that a brother offended is harder to win than a strong city. Because of this, it is our absolute desire to not offend the parents, nor the children in our community. This is where Vintz comes in. He does not say anything about being drunk or wine or getting wasted. He does, however, talk often about drinking God’s joy from the barrel He gave him! Please don’t misunderstand this, laughter, joy and happiness are **always** offensive to a religious spirit, but it is our desire to **only** offend religious spirits and not the people we want to reach. We want our city to be completely overwhelmed with the joy of the Lord, and Vintz is the perfect way to do so!

It has been proven that puppets are of great help to children’s counselors, especially when it comes to building trust and rapport. Elementary school counselors all over use puppets to help children talk about their emotions and problems. In other words, a child will trust and open up to a puppet much easier than they will an adult. This again, gives Vintz a great advantage to bringing the joy of the Lord as a solution for the children.

I want to expand some on what I mean by a solution for the children. Here are some quotes from some mid 2009 news websites, and the titles of the articles:

**Call to Increase Child Therapists: Children's mental health services need an extra 1,000 therapists to help them cope with demand, an influential government adviser has warned. (England)**

**Child Depression Drug Use Soars: The number of prescriptions handed out to children under 16 for depression and mental health disorders has quadrupled in a decade, official figures indicate.**

We all know this, but one of the greatest attacks the devil has launched against the earth right now is depression, as you can see by these articles. And of course we know too, that the Kingdom of God coming to earth as it is in heaven is the solution for every problem we face. Since joy is 1/3 of the Kingdom (Romans 14:17), it is obviously God’s solution to this attack.

In Dec 2008, TIME magazine published an article titled, “The Happiness Effect” which says, “Because of their social and peer networks, children have a higher likelihood of sharing information with the most people.” In this article, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention is looking for the fastest way to spread information about how important annual flu shots are. Because of the connectedness of children, health officials hope that targeting them will cause “a literal and figurative viral wave of vaccination among the kid’s peers, their peers’ peers, and even those peers’ parents and grandparents.” This research is suggesting that **if the children learn** how easy it is to prevent catching the flu, **they will notify so many people it could actually prevent entire geographical areas from being affected** by the virus.

Not only is the joy of the Lord the solution to depression, but by targeting children; the Kingdom will spread at a speed unparalleled by any other means!!

For the teacher who is using Vintz, the best thing you can do is study this **for you**. Too many children’s teachers study to teach, then merely repeat information they’ve read. Studying for yourself, and drinking God’s presence for yourself, will guarantee that your children get much more than just information, they will get revelation and impartation!!

Drinking in His presence and laughter comes from a revelation of what Jesus has done *to* us, and not just *for* us. We were crucified with Him (Gal. 2:20, Rom. 6:6), therefore, He didn’t only die *for* us, He died *as* us. We were also buried with Him in baptism (Rom 6:4). Now we no longer wrestle against flesh and blood, not even our own (Eph 6:12). “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Pr. 23:7), and Romans 6:11 tells us how to think; “We must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God”. He made us alive together with Him and raised us up into the heavenly places (Eph 2:4-6). Col. 2:11-14 speaks of us as the circumcised of Christ, meaning He has cut away everything that kept us from an intimate relationship with Him. This circumcision is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Deut. 30:6; so that we would love Him with all our heart and all our soul, that we may live. Because He first loved us, we love Him, and now we have continual access to His manifest Presence (John 14:21).

Romans 10:15 says "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" The glad tidings of good things, is that God has peace with us and we have peace with Him, all because of Jesus’ death on the cross. If we are not bringing glad tidings of good things, then we are not preaching the gospel of peace. Two verses later we read that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. If we are not preaching the gospel that God has peace with us through Jesus…if we are not preaching glad tidings of good things…it will not be faith that comes to the people who hear us!

*A common question that is asked whenever we teach on joy is, “what about the fear of the Lord?” Believe me, it is my heart’s desire to raise children in the fear of the Lord, but I’d like you to see a few things pertaining to this. Hebrews 1:9 says, “You love justice and* ***hate evil****. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else." In Proverbs 8:13, the fear of the Lord is to “****hate evil****.” When you look at these two verses together, you see that the anointing of joy is what God gives to those who fear Him. Joy is the anointing God gives to those who fear Him, while depression is the anointing from the devil for those who fear anyone or anything but God! So how is the fear of the Lord imparted? Psalm 130:3-4 says, “If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness;* ***therefore you are feared****.” The reason the Lord is feared is because He keeps no record of sins (1 Cor. 13:5), it’s because of forgiveness! Most people believe that the fear of the Lord is imparted through the threat of punishment, but it actually comes through knowing we will not be punished, because Jesus was punished for us! When the devil approached Jesus, he wanted Jesus to worship him. Jesus’ response was to quote Deuteronomy 6:13, “You shall fear the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.” Except when Jesus quoted it, He called fear worship (Matthew 4:10)! The fear of punishment is cast out by love (1 John 4:18) and the more we know we are forgiven, the more capacity we have to love (Luke 7:47)! As I put the fear of the Lord in the context of my relationship with my daughter, I never want her to be afraid that I will hurt her if she does something wrong. I do want her to be afraid that she will hurt me if she does something wrong. I want our love to be so strong that she is afraid to hurt me! That’s the only fear I want her to have of me. As for us with God, avoiding evil because we are afraid He will hurt us the kind of fear that love casts out. We should only avoid evil for fear of hurting Him.*

As we will see later when Vintz teaches on Gideon’s army, it is the ones who are willing to set down the things they’ve been carrying, in order to drink, whom God chooses as His army that watches the enemy run from them and destroy themselves. In other words, God gives extravagant victory to those who are willing to set everything down to drink of His presence. To see these great victories, we also must be willing to set everything down, all baggage, all weapons, all supplies, simply to drink of His presence. In the world, most people run from their battles to their drink, but God wants us to drink on our way to the battles.

In this curriculum, Vintz is constantly interacting with another person on stage, as well as the children. This is for 2 reasons: it helps bring clarity to what Vintz is teaching, and, prevents what he is teaching from becoming considered a fantasy not to be taken seriously (which can happen sometimes with puppets). Another way to make sure he is not thought of as fantasy is, while using Vintz, and especially when he leaves the stage, it is very important to treat him as if he is a real person. When he is finished, he needs to be put away in a safe place. As the teacher, do not allow the kids to treat him as a toy, touching him and poking him. He needs to be respected by you and the children as though he is one of their pastors and teachers.

The person who interacts with Vintz on the stage, as well as the person who is Vintz (this can be the same person if you don’t have another teacher) needs to be ready to improvise at any given moment. You want to stick to the teaching as much as possible, but at the same time be ready for anything.

The **T:** is used throughout the entire curriculum, for every time the teacher is talking with Vintz. These do not have to be followed exactly! And it is recommended that this teacher on stage be dramatic while talking with Vintz (looking at his stomach, holding out his hands making a barrel, etc), as well as being free to ad lib with Vintz some.

Vintz’s teachings aren’t long; his curriculum is designed for him to come out for a few minutes at your Kid’s Church or Sunday School on a regular basis. That way, instead of teaching on joy once or twice a year as an entire lesson, he will bring joy week after week! Every time Vintz teaches, He, the leaders, and the kids will take time to drink from the barrel of joy!! He gives them time to be filled with God. He has the kids and adults form a barrel with their hands and dunk their heads into it, or they can lift it up, tilt their heads back, and pour it down their throats!!! Go ahead and have as much fun with it as you want!

This, “make believing” that our arms make a barrel, does raise a couple questions: Is acting this out really doing anything? Are we just making things up? In 2 Kings 13:18-19, Elisha directed the king to strike arrows on the ground. The King didn’t know it at the time, but his victories over his enemies were determined by how he “acted out” what he was told. Our physical obedience to prophetic direction will determine our level of spiritual breakthrough. Also, in Mat 5:28, Jesus said that what we do in our imaginations is just as real as if we’d done it in the natural. In late 2009, a burnt out missionary who had just left the mission field, was at a service where we were drinking from our barrels. At first it seemed like nothing happened to him, until he tried to drive home! For the entire drive, something like 45 minutes, he laughed like he never had in his life; and for the first time, he was refreshed by and actually enjoyed God’s presence.

After every teaching we have included the verses that Vintz shares from, so you can look them up.