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Parents and Spiritual Education

God's Bible Promises for kids

Always do your best—then leave it to God and he will do the rest.
"The person who serves God will be ready and will have everything he needs to do every good work."
2 Timothy 3:17

It's better to be right than popular.
"How can a young person live a pure life? He can do it by obeying your word."
Psalms 119:9

from: Daly, R., "God's Little Book of Bible Promises for Children", Autumn House, Grantham, Great Britain, 2000

Over the past decade, most parents in our society have left education to specialists. Schooling was left to the teachers. Moral education has been left to society and justice. And most importantly, spiritual issues were left in the hands of the church.

Most parents understand the importance of a good education, and they are convinced that the church is the only specialized place for this. That means that most of the time no experience or sharing of faith is lived in a home.

Children's Ministries and Children's Sabbath School are in great difficulty. The only time when the Bible is opened and faith is shared is now only in the church. Yet, it is in the family that children spend most of their time.

Home: the first place to experience faith

Very early, the child feels emotions, even before he or she has an intellectual understanding of things. That is why the first place where the child will discover the best emotions is at home. It is through this and with the help of parents that the

child will build his or her life, his or her emotions and his or her knowledge.

The feeling

The little child will understand his/her environment and discover life experiences through emotions, eyes, games and contact that parents will have with him/her. When a home is filled with peace, joy, and special care, then the young child will grow in the same way. The same is true for the spiritual aspect. There is no need to intellectually explain a biblical text to him/her because it is obvious that he/she will not understand. But very early on, he/she can feel the moments when the parents start praying, singing, talking to God, telling Bible stories to the toddler. When the little child, the baby, sees his/her parents, his/her brothers and sisters, singing the same songs every day at the same time, the baby or toddler will interpret this as a whole part of the life of the home. It is part of the spiritual life of the home.

The experience

When the child begins to learn to read

CARING FOR KIDS



What do children truly need to grow up happy? To feel that they fit in and matter? To believe that they are loved? They need you—you and other caring adults to genuinely be there for them as they're growing up. They need to know you care, not just on special occasions, but *every day*.

How do you do that? By accepting, guiding, and loving them in simple, yet meaningful ways.

You don't need a lot of time and money; you don't have to be a parent, teacher, or coach. Sincerely Showing children you care can make a difference, helping to bring out the best in them—and in you.

Show up at their concerts, games, and events.

Find a common interest.

Hold hands during a walk.

Apologize when you've done something wrong.

Listen to their favorite music with them.

Keep the promises you make.

Wave and smile when you part.

Display their artwork in your home.

Thank them.

Point out what you like about them.

Clip magazine pictures or articles that interest them.

Give them lots of compliments.

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and to ask for an explanation of certain words, the spiritual life and faith sharing takes on a new dimension in the home. The child needs to understand the Bible story and especially how to put it into practice in everyday life: it is the daily experience.

Faith becomes a reality for him/her when he/she prays for his/her friends, his/her family, for the everyday life matters; he/she puts his/her faith and his/her relationship with God into practice on a daily basis. This is the moment when he/she will face a reality. For him/her faith is not magic, faith is built day after day; it is mine, and not only my parents' faith.

Consistency

After all those years of life between emotional education and sharing Bible texts, the moment of coherence comes. Now, it is a teenager who checks whether his/her parents' faith is a practical and coherent faith. He/she sees whether the words in the Bible are practiced and if they can become a daily experience in the home. This is often the time when he/she verifies that the experience of faith is something that is lived beyond the house and home. The faith of parents and the faith of the family is based on coherence and everyday practice.

What can Children's Ministries do?

Facing all these explanations, one might think that this is a job for Family

Ministries. But I also think that Children's Ministries has a role to play. The fact that this ministry often only works on Sabbath in church reinforces the desire of parents to tell themselves that spiritual education is indeed a church matter. However, Children's Ministries has a role to play, in collaboration with Family Ministries, to help parents to live practical faith and spirituality in their homes every day.

For many parents, it has become very difficult to understand and discover their role and tasks with their children. Many are now looking for ideas, solutions and examples to better meet the needs of this new-born baby they cherish so much. That's why our role is also to support and provide ideas, proposals and solutions to parents who need help.

It is up to us, people used to work with children, to help parents rediscover their place with their children. It is also up to us to reinvent family worship or moments of Bible sharing with children. Things are no longer taken for granted but rather as something that must be reflected, worked on and shared. ♦

Pascal Rodet

Franco-Belgian Union
Children's Ministries Director



JESUS

wants all of me

God and You—Partners

What do you want to be when you grow up? Let God direct your life, and you will succeed no matter your profession. Maybe you want to be a teacher, doctor, or journalist, or have your own business. This will depend on the talents you have. Some people speak well in public, others know how to sing, and others can play sports very well. If God is preparing you to be a violinist, for ex-

ample, do your very best. God has a plan for every little detail of your life. Count on Him to make your day-to-day choices. God and you are partners. But you have to fulfill your part in this partnership. God won't do what you need to do. He can, but He won't do that. What do you think is your responsibility? Do the best you can in everything and seek first to please God. It is God's will that matters!

“So whether you eat or drink at whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God.”

1 Corinthians 10:31

From: Ferreira de Oliveira, S. *Talking with God*. Editorial Safeliz, Madrid, Spain, 2015

GABRIEL (3 YEARS)



Is the mummy of a chocolate egg a chocolate hen?

From: www.enfandises.com/en/bibliotheque/cat-19-fest/phrase-22028.html

IN SYNERGY

ADRA and Children Global Citizenship Education

Afia was among the first women who welcomed me with a big smile. Soon others joined and suddenly I was the most photographed person inside a big, hot and humid meeting hall. I wish I could say that some kind of talent of mine was the reason for this sudden outburst of pictures ... but I can't. A simple fact that I have very white skin and blond hair was enough to make me a selfie-queen. Over one hundred staff members of ADRA Bangladesh gathered. This time my friend Siri was conducting the workshops for them. My role was to evaluate the trainings and learning processes. After each session I met with a different group.

Afia was part of the group I met with on the first day. She was talkative and loud. Really loud. This was quite unusual for a woman from Bengali culture. Soon they shared with me the challenges they face as they work with children in Dhaka's slums or remote villages. One of the biggest issues and concerns was lack of properly educated teachers.

"Look at me. I had a good education. I was going to mission school and I am very well educated and was able to go to university. It was just because I was in a mission



school. I am telling you the truth." Afia was able to receive quality education from a good school. This made all the difference in her life. She is part of senior management team in ADRA Bangladesh and her voice is heard, her work appreciated, her opinion respected and her impact is growing. Afia believes in the power of good education and is a strong advocate for educated, trained teachers inside Bengali schools.

Children in developing countries face many barriers to accessing an education. Some are obvious, while others are subtler, like the teacher at the school not having had the training needed to help children learn effectively. Teacher effectiveness has been found to be the most important predictor of student learning.

There are not enough teachers to achieve universal primary or secondary education, and many of the teachers that are currently working are untrained. There are 130 million children in school who are not learning basic

skills like reading, writing and math. Globally 69 million new teachers are required to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. There is a pressing need for teachers who are well-trained, well-supported and commensurately paid.

Increasing access to education can improve the overall health and longevity of a society, grow economies, and even combat climate change.

What can I do?

Learn – study about the barriers to education and how can be removed.

Advocate – for every child, everywhere, to get proper education.

Support – projects and programs that enable access to education for every child.

Pray – for trained and educated teachers.



Maja Ahac
ADRA Eurpoe
Advocacy Coordinator



Accepting those who are different

Inclusion of children with special needs into the community (and also into their peer group) is not always easy for both sides. A simple strategy called "5B" can be very helpful to facilitate this process. It covers the following five steps (each beginning with "B"):

Barrier-free accessibility. It does not mean just the elimination of physical (architectural) barriers, so that those on the wheelchair can be welcome, but also removing or reducing the barriers in communication, barriers of our prejudices or misunderstandings which may sometimes lead to an exclusion of children with intellectual disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, ADHD syndrome etc.

Breaking the worries. Let's not be afraid of the contact with those who are different or have some special needs; let's build the community where such children and adults do not have to be afraid to enter and become a part of it. Let's also teach our children to be open for all their mates – even those with distinct differences.

Being nearby for those who need us. Many children (as well as adults) with special needs are limited in opportunities to acquire new social contacts. In the church community they expect more than just visiting

Sabbath worship once a week. This is the opportunity to build the real, informal relationships with these members and become Christians not only one day a week, but every day.

Biblical view on people with special needs. The Bible doesn't speak about the people with special needs as of those who are inferior or even rejected by God. On the contrary, Jesus even identifies with them (e.g. Matthew 25:34-40). Special needs are not always a consequence of sinful behavior of a person (John 9:1-3). Remember that every human being is worthy of our attention, everybody is invited to receive God's grace and to follow Jesus. No one is excluded from becoming part of Christ's body and His living temple - including those who are disadvantaged or even rejected in major society (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 2:19-22; James 2:8-9).

Building the church together. It is our privilege to create the body of Christ and His living temple, in which



all the followers have their place and mission, regardless of their human weaknesses, limitations or so-called special needs. Even the children with some kind of disability have much more abilities which are waiting for possibilities and opportunities to be used. All of us – children, adults or seniors can provide already here, on earth the living experience of present kingdom of God. It can be a living testimony of God, who will not cast out anyone that comes to Him (John 6:37-40).

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The Bible should be the child's first textbook. From this book, parents are to give wise instruction. The word of God is to be made the rule of the life. From it the children are to learn that God is their Father; and from the beautiful lessons of His word they are to gain a knowledge of His character.

Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 108



Heads-Up on Hair

Incredi-Biblical

"Gray hair is a crown of splendor."

Proverbs 16:31



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Info Splat

The first hair dryer was a vacuum cleaner. Around 1900, women used a hose attached to the exhaust of their vacuums to dry their hair. The first real hair dryer was invented in 1920, and a better model arrived in 1951.

Have your parents ever told you that you're giving them gray hair? Well, you're off the hook.

It turns out that gray hair happens for another reason. The roots of your parent's hair (and yours!) are surrounded by follicles. In each follicle are color pigment cells that produce melanin, which is what gives hair its color. (It's also what gives our skin its color.) As people grow older, the pigment cells inside the follicle gradually die. That means there is less melanin to color the hair, and—you guessed it—hair grows in shades of gray or white

instead of black, brown, blond, or red.

The Bible considers gray hair to be an honor. It's true! Solomon describes gray hair as a crown of splendor. Isn't that a neat way to think of it? If our society valued gray hair as much as Solomon did, then hair salons would probably have a lot less business.

Maybe the next time your mom and dad complain about finding new gray hairs, you can remind them that they're one step closer to wearing that crown of splendor. But now that you know the truth, just don't let them blame that crown of splendor on you.

React now!

What can you do to show the older generations of your family that they are loved and valued?

From: Bockmann, M. et al. *Elasti-Brain. 365 Devotions to Stretch your Mind and Shape your Faith*. Review and Herald Publishing Ass., Hagerstown, MD, USA, 2008

SECRETS FROM THE TREASURE CHEST



Why do parents always say, "I know my child," and think they know what you're thinking and feeling?

— Adrian, 12

Probably because they *want* to understand you and help you with your problems.

When a mom or dad says, "I know my child," what they're really saying is "From observing my son or daughter's behavior during the past 12 years, I believe I know how he or she will react to certain situations." One problem: kids, especially teenagers, can change like the weather.

That's why it's important for parents to be a part of their offspring's lives. Then they're in a better position to sense the changes in their children's attitudes, recognize increasing peer pressures, understand fears and uncertainties, and know what their kids are up against.

But most parents have precious little time to spend with their family. So *you* have to become the teacher, filling your mom or dad in on the finer details of your life, letting them know when your attitudes change, allowing them to discover what you're thinking, and what scares you.

Believe me, there's a real advantage to having parents who say they "know their child" and actually do. You can use their experience to your benefit, unless you like messing up your life while they stand by and watch because you refuse

to communicate with them.

Give dear ol' mom or dad a break. Tell 'em how you feel. Allow them to really truly know you. You'll like the results!



From: Mills, C. *Secrets from the Treasure Chest. Questions Kids ask about Life*. Review and Herald Publishing Ass., Hagerstown, MD, USA, 1996

Abuse

Supporting Children who are suffering

The Basics

Child abuse is shocking and all too common. Someone is abusive if he or she fails to nurture a child, physically injures a child, or relates sexually to a child. Physical abuse often garners the most attention in the news, but the more subtle forms of abuse, such as neglect and emotional abuse, can be just as detrimental. The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. Be aware that these signs may not always point to child abuse.

Types of child abuse

- **Emotional.** Emotional abuse is any attitude, behavior, or failure to act that interferes with a child's mental health or social development. It can range from a simple verbal insult to an extreme form of punishment. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms of abuse are present. Emotional abuse can have the deepest effect on the mental health of a child. Signs: apathy (not caring), depression, choosing not to play or be involved in activities, hostility, aggression
- **Neglect.** Neglect is a common type of child abuse. More children suffer from neglect than from physical and sexual abuse combined. Yet victims of neglect often go unnoticed because neglect is an act of omission. The child may be ignored, not fed, or have medical needs that are left untreated. A single incident of neglect might not be considered child abuse, but repeated neglect is definitely abuse. Signs: lack of supervision, not being properly dressed for weather, hoarding food, frequent illness due to poor nutrition
- **Physical.** Physical abuse is defined as any injury to a child that is a result of physical aggression. This aggression may include slapping, beating, or hitting a child, as well as shaking, biting, or kicking. Children who survive physical abuse are left with severe emotional scars. And as we all know from news accounts, not all children survive physical abuse. Signs: welts, bruises, or burns, often in unusual places on the body

- **Sexual.** Sexual abuse is any form of sexual act between an adult and a child. Adults who sexually abuse children may do so by fondling or touching private body parts. They may force a child to undress or force a child to watch them undress. Adults who sexually abuse may also force a child to watch others engage in sexual intercourse or introduce them to pornography. Signs: withdrawing, refusing to engage socially, refusing to undress for sports or other activities, exaggerated interest in sex, fear of contact such as a pat on the arm or hug



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Care Tips

Abusers are often people the child knows and trusts—as a result, children may love those who are hurting them. This makes it difficult for children to reveal the abuse because they fear getting the abuser in trouble.

- **Remain calm.** Speak in a calm and gentle voice so the child feels safe. Encourage the child to use his or her own words, and don't find fault or question whether the child is being truthful. Children seldom lie about any type of abuse they are enduring. Ask simple yet direct questions.
- **Reassure the child.** If a child discloses abuse, it's imperative to say you believe the disclosure and you will do whatever you can to create a safe environment. It's important to say that the child is not guilty and is not responsible for the abuse. Assure the child that he or she did not do anything wrong, and praise the child for having the courage to come forward. However, don't make promises you can't keep, such as promising to keep the disclosure a secret. But do reassure the child that you will only disclose the conversation to those who can help the child.

- **Seek help.** There is help and support available to the child. When you have enough information to make an informed report, stop the discussion.

What not to say

- **"You shouldn't get angry at God."** Allow a child to express anger to God for not preventing the abuse. Scriptures are filled with laments of people who worked through disappointment with God.
- **"Did ___ ever happen to you?"** Never ask leading questions. Young children want to please adults and are susceptible to saying whatever they think you want to hear. Instead, just listen to the child, then say, "Thank you for telling me about this."
- **"I can keep this secret."** Tell the child that your first responsibility is to protect children from danger. You can't keep secrets that lead to someone being hurt.
- **"You should have told me sooner."** It takes a great deal of courage for a child to disclose abuse. The child needs to be assured that he or she did the right thing by telling a trusted adult.

What to say

- **"I'm sorry this happened to you."** Empathizing with the child will demonstrate acceptance, support, and love for the child.
- **"Together we'll get help so you can feel safe."** This will send the message that you're willing to protect the child from further abuse. Let the child know that you'll be taking steps to promptly stop the abuse. The child may fear retaliation for disclosing the abuse. It's important to inform the child that you'll be calling someone whose job it is to keep children safe. Assure the child that this is a safe person who will listen, ask questions, and help.
- **"I believe you."** Abused children are often told by the abuser that no one will believe them if they tell. Abused children need to know that they are not to blame and that it was wrong for an adult to ask them to keep this type of secret.
- **"It's not your fault."** Children have a naturally egocentric outlook—and thus, the natural tendency to think that they are somehow responsible for the abuse. You can reassure the child that he or she is not to blame.
- **"I'll do everything I can to keep you safe."** While you can't promise to keep the child from ever being hurt again, you can commit to being his or her advocate. You can promise to report the abuse to authorities.



Redeeming the time (3)

Hello, fellows!

We carry on our thoughts on “redeeming the time”, focused on the most important sort of education - family education. Don't forget! Our children are victims of our lack of time for them.

Now, let's move one step further pondering upon the Biblical model of schooling depicted in Deuteronomy 6:6-9, counting and highlighting the extremely important moments when you, as parents pursue your pedagogical role. For this issue we'll discuss about “impress them (God's teachings) on your children” (NIV), or “repeat them again and again to your children (New Living Translation), or “you shall teach them diligently to your children (English Standard Version).

The Hebrew term used here for ‘teaching diligently’ literally means to pierce deeply into their hearts. Our children are similar to the fresh poured out concrete - whatsoever falls on them, is imprinted on their life. The good things committed to us should be carefully conveyed to our followers, making the Word of God familiar to them, associating God's law with ev-

erything and setting it forth clear. The old Egyptians used to wear precious stones, engraved with sacred words, incorporated into a piece of jewelry on their foreheads and arms. The Muslim people paint sentences from the Koran, such as “God is the Creator” over their doorposts, and even today some Jews carry on their body some of the most important passages of the Law. Evidently, we don't encourage an ostentatious usage of religion and religious elements. However, religion should be as natural as eating, and let's face it: we never mount home signage to prevent us from forgetting our daily meals. It's up to you, father and mother, to create and educate the spiritual appetite of your children through personal example and constant teaching.

The religion spoken about in this passage is not that shown to others in an exposed position, nor mechanically practiced, but that which grows from within. It is easy and convenient to keep up religious appearances, but to inculcate real religion into your family is unimaginable, unless it comes out of spiritual roots.

One way of impressing God's teaching on our children is to help them (1) understand it, instead of only exposing them to biblical lectures delivered many a times mechanically, (2) memorize it, and (3) love it. Thus, we will feed their spiritual roots which will grow and yield fruit for eternal life. When the roots are alive and healthy, nobody could preclude the tree from bearing fruits, sooner or later.

J. Trapp (1601 - 1609), the well-known Bible commentator whose large five-volume commentary is still read nowadays, who once said: *Be careful what books you read, for as water tastes of the soil it runs through, so does the soul taste of the authors that a man reads*, reminds the parents that children should be gradually accustomed to the biblical principles, even if they do not get their meaning, yet. Some day they might have time to think over these issues, and if any extreme conditions or state come, they would have the germ of well-being and a line leading to a safe haven.

CREATIVE WORSHIP IDEAS FOR BUSY FAMILIES

Feeling Stories

Bible Connection

"An angel of the Lord appeared to [the shepherds], and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people'" (Luke 2:9, NIV).

Things you need:

- Paper and pens

Worship activities

1. Read the Bible verses and imagine what it was like to be shepherd on the Bethlehem hills the night that Jesus was born. We know from the story that they were frightened by the angels and then happy and excited as they ran into town to find Jesus. What other feelings might they have had?
2. Take several sheets of paper and write one of the following words on each sheet: Confused, Worried, Sad, Angry, Afraid, Happy.
3. Then think of as many feeling words as you can, and write each feeling under the heading on one of the sheets of paper, or start a new category. This will give you a rich choice of feelings.
4. Keep your feeling lists and add other emotions as you think of them.
5. Stay with the story of Jesus' birth, and think about the feelings the various characters in the story experienced: Mary and Joseph, the innkeeper, God, the angels, the wise men, and Herod. Make a list of all the feelings each person may have had during the story.
6. Talk about why God made us with feelings. (Fear can protect us; happiness



helps us to enjoy life; anger can help us to stand up for ourselves or protect someone who is vulnerable; our feelings help us to communicate with each other and care for each other, etc.)

Prayer

Pray about your feelings. (Thank you that I am feeling happy about ...; I am feeling sad about ...; please comfort me; I am feeling angry about ...; please calm me and give me wisdom; I am worried/afraid about ...; please help me to trust You, etc.)

Experiment #3: The Burning Bill

The Bible contains stories about burning fires that did not cause harm because of God's intervention. God introduced Himself to Moses through a burning bush and, in the story of Daniel's friends, Jesus appeared in the fiery furnace and protected them from any damage. The following experiment can be used as an introduction or as a visual illustration to any of these stories.

Materials: Small bill (5 €), container (bowl), water, alcohol, metal tongs, lighter, platter

Time: 3 minutes

Safety warning: This experiment uses fire so it must be performed at a safe distance from children and on a non-flammable surface.

Values: God's protection

Procedure:

1. Mix equal amount of water and alcohol 90° in the bowl.
2. Soak the bill in the water-alcohol mixture.

3. Hold the bill with the metal tongs, over a platter with a thin layer of water (for safety).
4. Turn on the lighter and approach the bill to ignite the alcohol on fire. The flames will not damage the bill.
5. Wait for the flames to be extinguished and show the undamaged bill.

This experiment works better if the room is in semi darkness. If there is too much light, the flames on the bill will not be visible.

The Science Behind The Experiment: The bill is soaked with water and alcohol. When the alcohol ignites, the heat that is produced evaporates the water and cools the bill, preventing it from getting burned.



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Noemi Duran
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STEWARDSHIP AND CHILDREN

Carnet personnel— A tool for children to understand Stewardship

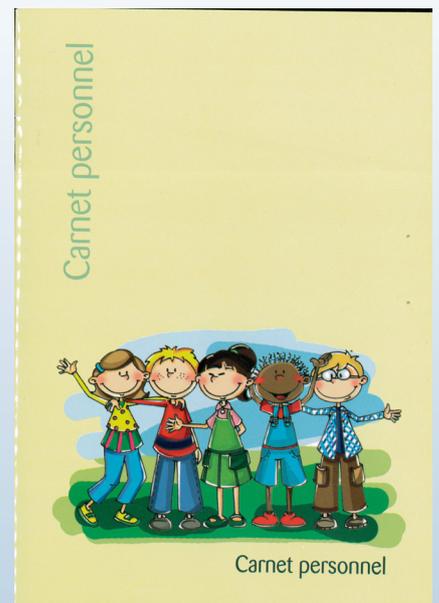
Around the year 2009, Children's, Youth and Stewardship Ministries worked together to create a tool to help children to better understand what it means to be a faithful Steward of our life. The purpose was to involve young children, starting from about 7 years old, in a learning process about life management and use this booklet as a tool to help them to focus on different aspects of their lives that need to be managed: body, mind, soul, school time, home chores, leisure time, environment, talents, friendship, money,...

Now we are happy to say that we'll make a further step on the process and work to make it available in

others languages (it exists already in French, Italian and Czech). But beside that the Stewardship department of the EUD decided to work on the possibility to create an App that will continue in the same line of the booklet.

We are looking forward to this great opportunity, because we know that this will allow many more children to be able to get involved in this project that will impact their whole life. Being good managers is a lifelong experience and need to become a lifestyle mode.

We'll keep you posted!



Elsa Cozzi
Inter-European Division
Children's MInistries Director



Ioan Campian
Inter-European Division
Stewardship Director





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TURBOCHARGE

your Children's Ministry

Don't Raise Your Hand

I love to teach live. The bigger the crowd, the better. I love seeing the faces of kids as they engage and participate in the message, game, or song. While your ministry may look different from others, the following principles will transcend denomination and style and will touch the hearts of the kids you're ministering to.

Why would you want to duplicate school? In our ministry, we do everything we can to stay away from resembling school. Why? Kids spend a pretty big chunk of their waking hours sitting in a school classroom. Plus, most kids don't love school. Even those who do are happy to get out every once in awhile.

See through a child's eyes. In this generation, we must grab kid's attention to engage them. Go spend one day in a typical elementary school. You'll see

mountains of worksheets, comprehension questions, hand raising, sitting still, and lots of reading, writing, and homework. Now think like a kid. What compels you to engage? What makes you want to be there? As you ask God to reveal his will for your ministry, ask him to help you think like a child. Ask for insight into the world of contemporary children.

Bring in a focus group of kids.

Kids are remarkably creative, they're full of great new ideas, and they love for grown-ups to ask for their opinions.

Go on a field trip. Visit places that are engaging to children. I can't go anywhere anymore and not be "working." From the mall to Chuck E. Cheese to Disneyland, I'm constantly looking at what materials they're using for their signage, what color palettes they're

using, and how they separate areas for specific age groups. I also look at which characters have stood the test of time and which new ones seem to be working. The world around you is full of success stories of how to relate to kids. Learn from them!

We must engage our kids. We must find ways to create environments and experiences that will make them want to return, and make them want to bring their friends. We do everything we can to stay far, far away from anything that looks remotely like school. It means we jump up and down during the game. It means we have fun with hand motions during worship. It means we laugh out loud. It means that when I ask you a question, I want you to scream out your answer...

But don't you dare raise your hand!

From: Hudson, D. & Werner, S.: *100 Best Ideas to Turbocharge your Children's Ministry*. Group Publishing, Loveland, Colorado, USA, 2013

52 WAYS TO PARENT HAPPY CHILDREN

Shape their happy thoughts

It doesn't take many words to shape the way a child will think for the rest of his or her life. Our thoughtless words can tear our children down, create fears and worries, undermine their confidence, and break their hearts. Alternatively, we can choose our words carefully, and fill their minds with positive thoughts. Painful words and repeated phrases can etch themselves into a child's brain and reverberate through their thoughts for many years.

As parents we often need to stop and think about why we say what we say. And we also need to think about what we need to stop saying to our children, because we don't want to give them unhappy messages that will stay in their thoughts and hurt them for years to come.

If you have said hurting words to your child, don't spend time just feeling guilty.

Put the mistakes behind you, and start to heal the sad and painful thoughts that have come from your words.

Make a list of the thoughtless and negative messages you might say to your child. Think about the unintentional messages these are giving to your child. For example: "I don't like you", "You're just a nuisance", "You'll never be any good." For each unintentional message think about what's really true: "I love you, but sometimes I don't know how to help you make wise behavior choices", "I love you and you're very precious to me, but sometimes I am so tired I say hurtful things without thinking", "I love you and I want you e. I know that takes a lot of effort and I really want to help you work at the things you find hard." Find a quiet, private time to talk together. Apologize to your child for the hurtful things you've said, and tell

them what you really meant to say—the positive message. This might not be easy for you, but

it will be tremendously healing for your child. Children have a deep respect for parents who are wise and honest enough to say sorry when they make mistakes. Repeat the positive messages whenever you can to help erase the memory of the hurtful messages and help to give your child positive and happy thoughts that will encourage and strengthen them through the challenges of life.



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From: Holford K.: *52 Ways to Parent Happy Children*. Autumn House Publications, Grantham, Lincolnshire, UK, 2016



ACTIVITY REPORT



News of the Franco-Belgian Union

Diversity and its harmony... in music

“The value of song as a means of education should never be lost sight of. Let there be singing in the home, of songs that are sweet and pure, and there will be fewer words of censure and more of cheerfulness and hope and joy. Let there be singing in the school, and the pupils will be drawn closer to God, to their teachers, and to one another.” (EGW, Education, p. 168)

The sumptuous church of Neuilly sur Seine hosted for the fifth time the children's choir concert on January 20, 2018.

It was an opportunity for joy, sharing and an effective way to rejuvenate both the children involved, the choir leaders of the children and, of course, to encourage other children who, maybe because of shyness, did not



follow the invitation of our sister Françoise Toniolo who organized this concert.

The participating children are very different: ages (between 3 and 14 years old), origin (Malagasy, Romanian, West Indian, French ...) and musical levels (between 2 and 10 years of music school).

I'll present to you every group that participated this time:

- Chanterelle, CHM North France Conference
- Vox Angeli, Neuilly
- Arc en ciel (Rainbow), Neuilly Bourgeons
- Angélique Harmonie (Angelic harmony), Romania
- Maranatha, Malagasy
- Etincelle du buisson ardent (Sparks of the burning bush), Aubervilliers

Each choir was able to contribute according to its kind of music and repertoire, but the most moving moment, if you allow me, was when all the choirs sang together (90 children), accompanied by the string orchestra put together by young Franco-Romanians from the church Vincent-Auriol, led by Israel Hinoestroza.



This year, a humanitarian dimension has been desired. Funds raised at the end of the concert will be used to purchase a van and equipment for carrying out activities for homeless children (children of migrants, refugees, Roma, etc.).

Music can create links without any translation of words. It offers a sweet message of love, peace, unity.

Personally, I look forward to the next concert that will take place soon, always in a setting that invites to worship our Lord.

Luminita Petcut
North France Conference
Lay Member



Belgo-Luxembourg Conference

The Belgo-Luxembourg Conference is part of the Franco-Belgium Union.

In spite of being a relatively small Conference, the CHM department had provided to all sabbath school teachers and parents, several trainings programs.

Trainings sessions on Leadership 2016-2019

Different interesting subjects were presented.

These trainings consist of 8 levels leading to a Certification in Leadership in order to facilitate learning and enhancing aptitudes for better service to local churches in leading children to Christ.

We emphasized the responsibility of parents on their important role of helping their children in developing their faith in an early age, as we call it “the 0-14 window frame”.

So far, we have completed 3 trainings on Leadership and 1 on Parenting and Grand parenting.

The assistance ranged from 54 to 72 participants over a whole weekend in which we shared our concerns and passion for this ministry.

14 participants completed the Certification after the 4 sessions.



10 days of prayer 2019

Some churches included their children during the 10 days of prayer, in which



they were praying, reading promises, and praises to Jesus.

Children's Sabbath programs and children's week of prayer were also a blessing, as well as yearly “Sharing talents” where different workshops are offered to all Sabbath School teachers.



Children's Sabbath: Peter walks on the water

Elizabeth Gonzalez Liénard
Belgo-Luxembourg Conference
CHM Director





ACTIVITY REPORT



News of the Franco-Belgian Union

Come and see, with Jesus I can

An inspired world of children

More than ever, the universe of the child (or Kids' universe or kid ding) is highly developed, in the intellectual field, leisure, fashion etc. In addition, the child's environment is performed, offering him/her a decoration of objects and/or materials adapted to his/her child universe. Scientific research is also greedy about children, in sociology and neuroscience, focusing more and more on the capacities of the brain from the fetus on.

In short, the child is at the center of all possible attention that would demonstrate his/her skills, because the child is competent and we must not neglect this fertile period of the child.

But long before that, Jesus had already recognized in the child an exceptional potential, an extraordinary wisdom and intelligence, an intellectual performance that would surpass that of the adult. Indeed, he highlights his/her ability to discern what is right and wrong, and in particular, to understand the plan of salvation that God has planned for man or humanity.

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them



and blessed them. (Mark 10:14-16)

This performance is very real in children and in a gathering of children; it is the crackle of intelligence and life, an explosion of generosity, an overflow of spontaneity and joy.

This is what happened on Sabbath, February 16, at Mas (75) with the CHM North France Conf. Come and See, with Jesus I can.... A very festive and colourful atmosphere offered to children to express their love for Jesus. A farandole of children for moments full of joy, sharing, good humour, praise, wonder, smiles, talents, joyful companionship, and also with children capable of meditation, spiritual and solemn commitment.

Once the decor was set, the children enthusiastically gave life to the songs, games and activities prepared for them. They sang with their hearts, actively participated in charades, riddles and various workshops throughout the day. Some have demonstrated their musical and singing skills by performing in front of their classmates. Wow! Wow! The worship of children is a power to the heavenly throne!

“Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.” (Psalm 8:2)

Without hesitation, we can say in chorus with the organizers: “They were superb.” We can only congratulate them for their overflowing energy, their sense of sharing, especially during inter-church workshops, for their warm fraternity, their communicative joy and their devotion to Jesus.

Today, we cannot deny the strong and

powerful power of the children in our communities. We must be committed to creating opportunities for the children of our churches to show their innate ability to want to do what Jesus expects of them. Because their love for Jesus is spontaneous, true and sincere. This was the feeling of the moved adults who were present that Saturday.

Some brought non-Adventist friends to this meeting and participated in the 2019 Gospel Campaign - Hope 2019.

Let's hope that exceptional moments like these will be experienced with a greater number of children. We pray that we, the adults who surround and accompany them, may give priority in our missions to the hearts of children over Jesus.

With joyful and warm thanks to all our organizers, Françoise Toniolo, Eléna, Andréa, Gabriele Zagara, Roseline De Andrade, Lauriane Delyon, Emanuel Ban, Jacques Dalenc, Alex, Loic and animators who made this day an exceptional parenthesis of glorious child lives for Christ.



Rebecca Despons-Perrier
North France Conference
Lay Member





ACTIVITY REPORT



News of the Franco-Belgian Union

Communicate! Help each other!

As “Real Time Faith”- Sabbath School Teacher from Dammarie, I had the pleasure of participating for the first time, with three other “Real Time Faith”- Sabbath School Teachers and sixteen young people from my church, in a friendly, dynamic and very enriching meeting that brought together more than 200 participants from about fifteen churches of the North France Conference (NFC), mostly from the Paris region. Congratulations to the bravest people who were travelling from Orléans, Lille and Metz!

The “Maison des Associations et de Solidarité” du 13è (Le MAS), a sober and sufficient reception area, opened its doors to us at 9:30 am for a programme scheduled from 10 am to 5 pm. An hour to eat lunch, with sandwiches from the bag, and enjoy sharing with other churches. Drinks and small pastries at the end of the day offered, always very appreciated by our dear teenagers but also by their companions, did not stay long on the tables!

A very varied, creative, participative, interactive and playful programme, where young people and leaders gave their best through individual or group songs and musical performances with surprising talents, biblical reflections in groups and strong thoughts shared in visual ways, testimonies, times of prayer and consecration. A special offering for

humanitarian purposes and a Bible verse in the form of a large puzzle to be put together, in teams of six to seven participants, all churches included!

Beautiful musical accompaniment led by our tonic Harry Maddo (Liturgie NFC), a team of musicians familiar with their instruments and three pleasant Orléans singers!

Pastors Karel Denteneer (Evangelization-IEBC-Ministerial Association FBU), Matthieu Fury (Education & Family NFC), and Pedro Torres (Communications NFC) enthusiastically shared some biblical reflections and accompanied the young volunteers in personal prayer or in a video making workshop. I particularly appreciated the time when the young people were able to ask their questions and when our three speakers answered freely with accuracy and relevance.

A big thank you to Françoise Tonio, our Conference CHM/ChSS Director, always full of energy, creativity and dedication, and her dedicated collaborators Roseline De Andrade, Laurianne Delyon and Evelyne Chelza, for their leadership and quality service!

You can review these moments on the MAE website - www.mae-eds.fr

Our gratitude goes to our God for this wonderful day!

On the way back, the young people I was carrying in my car, expressed their



happiness and joy while already dreaming of other inter-church meetings...

Bertrand Clavier
North France Conference
ChSS Teacher



Testimonies by children

Sabbath School, a very long history

by Theo, 10 years old

This school gives me a lot of happiness because of the singing, praying, and studying especially with our Sabbath School teachers. When I can't be there, I am extremely sad not to share the joy of the Lord. But Saturday mornings are always good mornings.

Robin

How the Sabbath School lesson "Fixing the Walls" made its way into Robin's heart...

On Sabbath, at the time of the reca-

pitulation, he told us how he showed compassion for his little sister who kept coming into his room, playing in his things and slamming the door repeatedly. Receiving reprimands himself from his parents who heard his little sister whining, he thought that instead of getting angry and sulking his parents, he would put the lesson into practice. Just like his sister, he must have made the same mistakes. He had to be patient because she will eventually grow up and she will understand and stop disturbing her room. He decided not to blame her anymore.



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ACTIVITY REPORT



News of the Franco-Belgian Union

Puppet Theater

Nicole Erdmann and her team introduce children to several Bible stories such as:

Noah; Jonah; Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus... Then also other stories such as the little girl with matches, Father Martin etc.

It is always a happy, joyful moment where the children listen with interest, also participate by answering the questions asked by the characters, each has his or her favorite. It is also a possibility to invite one's classmates and thus the word of God

is inscribed in the hearts of children.

Always at the end of the show, the children can't help but say:

- It was wonderful!
- When is the next show?
- I liked such a character
- Who is it who makes the voice?
- The scenery is beautiful
- Etc.



Ideas for praying

Show several images (nature, a doctor taking care of a child, a firefighter, a handicapped child, a guide dog, etc.)

Do this in groups of 2 or 3.

Speak about what you see on the image for 5 minutes (Depending on the children's age):

- Is nature always beautiful? Who created it? Are there no vegetables in winter?
- The doctor or the firefighter – why is their profession useful?
- A child or adult with special need – What is it that Jesus gives them in addition to us that they can live with joy and happiness?
- What does the animal mean to me? How can it be useful when a child or adult has a difficulty?
- Etc.

Then every group prays about what they have found out.



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ACTIVITY REPORT



News of K.I.D. Italy

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

With this Bible verse the special worship on Sabbath, the 6th of April 2019, was introduced in the community of Forlì, Italy. A different kind of worship, within the Kids In Discipleship project. As Romina Saladino pointed out, this biblical text was particularly taken into account in the Jewish culture, where the family was a key element for the education of sons and daughters. But what about nowadays? In our western world, children are deprived of their parents’ teachings at a very young age and this happens for several hours per day. Children are also engaged in a number of activities, having full docket, like real businessmen. Yet, within this hectic society where the key words seem to be “not having enough time”, some families in the community of Forlì went against the tide for the past two years. Every week they carved out some time, with perseverance and dedication, to study the Bible together, to practice what the Bible preaches, to think and discuss together. If we work together, with commitment and enthusiasm, we will be able to raise grown-up able to resist with faith against the hard knocks that life delivers. Grown-up who want to be Jesus’ disciples, who want to make their practical contribution within their own community and society.

But how started this KID project in Forlì? Chiara Cupertino talks about it with enthusiasm, visibly moved. This all started with a training course held in Milan in June 2017. An adventure, in the truest sense of the word. After the training, the church advertising started, the desire of getting involved, the 12 training meetings between mentors and parents. The purpose? Mainly one: to help their children to become Jesus’ disciples and, in doing so, to become his disciples, as parents. The training ended with the diploma ceremony and a blessing in front of the entire community. Then came the time to involve the children: 17 parents and 17 children have participated in the project; they were so many that they were divided into two shifts: one on Friday evening, the other on Sabbath morning. Several were the activities planned, the commitment, the stimuli... always with the same constant, the Bible, a necessary means for facing even the most challenging subjects.

The KID project has also generated in the engaged families the desire to be more involved, to be part of that domino effect



where, by using their own talents, all different yet significant, they can have positive effect on other people, even without having to compete with big numbers of people. One person at a time, inviting others to discover the gifts that the Lord has given them and to put them at the service of others. Several are the projects emerged after those meetings: two girls will donate their hair, which shall be used for cancer patients’ wigs; others will visit more often the elderly people of the retirement home “Casa Mia” in Forlì, a young boy will prepare a biblical study to be submitted in school, a family has the desire to deepen the family worship; a teenage boy wants to be a more involved friend, even with symbolic gestures such as offering a cake; a mother will commit to prepare biblical messages to be shared with other families, others will visit children in the paediatrics ward, others want to make their own contribution by cleaning up the beach with the involvement of friends and family; a family desires to study more the Bible together, even with some friends. These are all examples and real projects that remind us that evangelization has more shapes and forms, all beautiful and relevant.

With all those participating, the emotion was inevitable. The worlds of those who for the past two years were involved in this project have positively affected the local church, who hopes that this project can restart as soon as possible.

But what about the families who have participated in this project? “My life is uglier now”. That’s how Levi, 6 years old, described his routine, now that the KID meetings are over, a sentence that, as funny as it may seem, demonstrates us how engaging this project was even for the children. In fact, who says that studying the Bible should be boring?

The kids who took part and benefited from this formation thanked for the very tangible examples that solved important doubts; they appreciated the dialogue, the

possibility of listening to other points of view, the opportunity to learn new things. They were positively impressed by being together, by praying as a family, by being able to understand what they were reading and studying.

The parents thanked the two mentors, Chiara and Romina, who really devoted themselves to the realization of this project, despite the many obstacles faced. That’s why it was crucial the existence of a prayer, five people who for two years, prayed for the realization and success of this project, a long-term investment for our families and children.

It was pointed out that the KID is not a simple project but a real mission, where the main purpose is to contribute to the salvation of the family. Some parents emerged stronger from this experience which, however tiring and time-consuming it may be, has also suggested them how to present and talk about the 28 fundamental beliefs in an accurate but concrete way. “Everything was family-friendly”: the parents were grateful that every topic was supported by the Bible and then discussed all together.

This special worship ended with another diploma ceremony held by Anna Cupertino, K.I.D. Coach, who also prayed for the community, asking for the Lord’s blessing on our families and children, with the request of receiving special support in this task of making disciples, after having become ourselves, as parents, Jesus’ disciples.

May the Lord bless and increase these projects not only in Forlì but also in others communities and countries, sure that good fruits will not be long to be seen.

Tiziana Calà
Italian Union
Member of Forlì Church
Pathfinder Leader



Keep in Mind

EVENTS FROM THE INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

2019



May 2-7

Communication Congress
Varna, **Bulgaria**

May 16-20

CHM Training Course with L. Koh
Timisoara, **Romania**

June 12-15

CHM Program and Training Course
Barcelona, **Spain**

July 28-August 4

EUD Camporee
Sesimbra, **Portugal**

September 18-22

People 7.0. Forward Together
Interministries Summit
Organized by
Children's / Family / Women's Ministries
Lignano Sabbiadoro (Venice), **Italy**



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BELLA ITALIA VILLAGE



The Link Between Fun and Faith in our homes

A game in the park with the kids. A backyard barbecue with neighbors. A Saturday afternoon spent tackling that yardwork you and your roommate have been putting off. These are all things that might make their way onto your household's to-do list this time of year, as spring's arrival makes it easier to spend more time outdoors or being active together. These are also things that, new Barna research shows, often coexist with spiritual vibrancy. The *Households of Faith* report, produced in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries and based on an extensive study of practicing Christians and their living arrangements, finds a consistent connection between households that prioritize quality time and households that prioritize faith formation.

Generally Active Households Are Spiritually Active Households

If we're regarding any effort toward faith formation in the household as an outcome on its own, and if we're seeking to understand what distinguishes the people who prioritize these efforts, it's instructive to know that they are the same people who appear to make *any* activity a priority. Welcoming guests, watching TV, sharing breakfast and other routines and rituals are also common in households that carve out time to read the Bible, pray or talk about God together. Conversely, households that do not engage in faith-based group activities are much more likely to say they don't do anything together

From: www.barna.com/research/fun-faith-in-our-homes/

(31% of those who do not have spiritual conversations, 23% of those who do not pray or read the Bible together).

In short, practicing Christians who intentionally cultivate a spiritual environment in their household are simply intentional to begin with. Good fun, good work and good faith seem to go hand in hand, indicating spiritual growth is yet another way of being present, interested and engaged in the lives of those around you, or vice versa. Barna has seen a similar correlation in some of its other reports, where positive tendencies are not exclusive, but hang together. In a study of perceptions of global poverty, the more someone cared about one issue, the more they cared about any injustice; in a study of vocation, the more someone was attuned to faith, the more they were attuned to their work. Similarly, in this study of Christian households, the more housemates engage in general activity, the more they engage in spiritual activity.

Vibrant Households Prioritize Togetherness

In this study, Barna also sought to learn from the households that appear to be exceptionally engaged in communal and consistent faith expression in the home. Barna developed a custom metric that sorts households by reports of collective, frequent engagement in key behaviors like:

- Spiritual practices—defined here as praying every day or two and reading the Bible weekly all together

- Spiritual conversations—defined here as talking about God and faith at least weekly all together
- Hospitality—defined here as welcoming non-family guests regularly, or at least several times a month

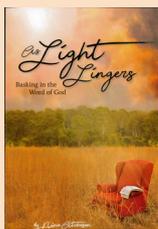
(...)

What the Research Means

“One of the more surprising and encouraging findings from this study,” says Brooke Hempell, Barna's senior vice president of research, “is that any sort of interaction—including just having fun—is correlated to faith formation. In other words, forming deeper bonds with our household members helps us grow our faith! The importance of fostering intimacy, sharing rituals and having fun with household members, as well as friends and other non-family guests who become a part of one's extended household, cannot be overstated.”

“Ministries have a duty to help their members understand and experience *all* of life as worship,” continues Hempell, “as well as to emphasize closeness, collaboration and fun as signs of life in the church. Churches that foster healthy spiritual growth should encourage Christians not only to know God but also to know their brothers and sisters in Christ, especially through gathering together outside the walls of the church. Our research finds that faith formation is best aided not just by services and sermons but by play and friendship as well.”

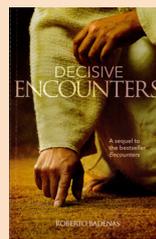
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



AS LIGHT LINGERS

Nina Atcheson

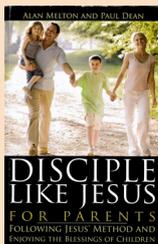
The devil uses every possible device to keep us away from reading the Bible, whether through apathy, busyness, doubt, or tiredness. Keeping our Bibles closed is his number-one strategy to weaken the lives of Christians today. In this book, you will find encouragement, advice, and practical strategies. In it, you will discover how basking in the power of God's Word will make you want to linger with God—because time with Him is so sweet.



DECISIVE ENCOUNTERS

Roberto Badenas

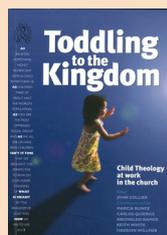
Life is a journey, full of surprises, emotions, possibilities, and encounters. Some of these encounters—whether sought or unexpected—can change the trajectory of our lives. They are decisive encounters. How paramount it is to have an encounter with someone who will be our friend, with who will be our partner, with people who influence our development and the shaping of our character, among others. However, of all encounters, the most important one is the encounter with Jesus. Throughout history, many people have met Him, and it has been a turning point in their lives.



DISCIPLE LIKE JESUS FOR PARENTS

Alan Melton & Paul Dean

The church is losing over two million children every year and they are not returning. What can parents do about this? Jesus showed us the way. Immediately following three years of making disciples, Jesus commanded us to do the same. This book offers practical, creative ways to make disciples of your children. Learn how His approach can transform your family into the image of Christ and allow you to enjoy the great blessings of children.



TODDLING TO THE KINGDOM

John Collier (Ed.)

This book is *not* about children. It's true that children feature prominently in its pages but it's not about them. The focus of all true Christian theology is God in Christ. That is what Child Theology and this book attempts to develop. So if you want to think about God and 'the way God does things' (aka 'The Kingdom of God'), this book is for you.



Producer: Elsa Cozzi
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