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# Little Ones Need Jesus



**Core Values Series**

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JACQUE BOLT

DIANE DYKGRAAF

We thank Jacque Bolt and Diane Dykgraaf, veteran leaders of the Little Lambs/Story Hour ministry of Kelloggsville Christian Reformed Church, Kentwood, Michigan, for cowriting this booklet. Thanks also to Amy Greving for the illustrations used on these pages.

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ISBN 1-56212-162-6

10987654321

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JACQUE BOLT    DIANE DYKGRAAF

CRC Publications  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to the following people whose stories appear in this booklet: Nell Kamerman, Manhattan, Montana; Claudia Vander Pol, Lynnwood, Washington; Kathy Leistra, Ada, Michigan; and Jane Loerup, Elmhurst, Illinois.

We also want to thank all the special little children who have touched our lives, including those whose stories we've shared with you in this booklet. They have taught us so much.

Our highest offering of gratitude and praise goes to our faithful, loving Shepherd who led us as we worked on this booklet, sometimes in the green pastures, and sometimes through the dark, scary places. He was always there, always in control. It's our prayer that he will use our efforts to encourage those who work with children and to build his eternal kingdom.

"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6).

*Jacque Bolt*

*Diane Dykgraaf*

*Kentwood, Michigan*

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# LITTLE ONES NEED JESUS

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## FOREWORD

**D**oleful brown eyes locked with mine. Tears welled up and spilled down flushed cheeks. I pulled Cameron's quivering little body close to mine and rocked him gently. How I had grown to love this precocious four-year-old!

"It's scary to go to bed without your mom, isn't it, Cameron?" I asked softly. He nodded, sad eyes pleading with me for help. I hugged him a little tighter.

Cameron and his single-parent mom had been guests in my home for five months of his mother's crisis pregnancy. I was her shepherding mom, and Cameron was the delightful bonus that came with her. Having just given birth, Cameron's mother was in the hospital overnight.

Never before had she left Cameron. They slept in the same bed, and often Cameron wouldn't let her out of his sight, trailing her from room to room in the house. The two had

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developed a dependency on one another born of a life of pain. Now he was struggling to cope for one night without her.

It was January, and I had recently experienced the joy of introducing Cameron and his mom to the baby Jesus of Christmas for the first time in their lives. On this night, Cameron and I had just read the Christmas story again. As I gazed into his sad and frightened eyes, I saw an opportunity to connect the Christmas story with reality.

“You know, Cameron,” I said, “even if your mom can’t be here to take care of you, you’re not alone. Jesus is here with you, and he will always take care of you.”

Cameron tilted his head back and looked at me skeptically as he struggled to make sense of what I had said. I had pledged never to lie to this precious child whose life was marred by mistrust and violence. He knew that and he trusted me. But what I had just told him didn’t add up.

“How can a baby take care of *me*?” he demanded.

I laughed. “Oh, Cameron,” I said, “Jesus didn’t stay a baby. He grew up to be a man. He is God’s Son, and because he loves you so very much, he even died on a cross to save you. Now he’s in heaven, and he will never leave you alone. He will stay with you in your bed all night long. You don’t have to be afraid when Jesus is with you.”

I felt Cameron’s tense little body relax as he tested the truth of what I had said. I was awed at the simple faith with which he accepted my words. I was seeing the Holy Spirit at work.

I carried Cameron upstairs, and together we knelt by his bed and prayed for Jesus to be with him through the night so he wouldn’t be afraid. In the semidarkness I could see his wide-eyed wonder as he watched me pray. Then calmly, quietly, and confidently he slipped under the covers, closed his eyes, and fell into a peaceful sleep.

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I watched him tenderly, overwhelmed with gratitude to God for allowing me to be a part of this miracle of faith. Cameron knew I would be in the next room if he needed me, but more importantly, he believed that Jesus would never leave him. I was seeing firsthand the truth of Jesus' words, "Except you have the faith of a little child, you cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Holy Spirit continued to work in his little life, and his faith grew. At Easter we watched the story of Jesus' death and resurrection on TV. Cameron was transfixed. He turned to me and with wonder said, "Betty, I love Jesus. When I'm afraid in the dark, I just pray, 'Dear Jesus, please be with me,' and then I'm not afraid anymore." He clasped his hands tightly together and squeezed his eyes shut as he prayed.

As you teach Story Hour or Little Lambs, never doubt the importance of sharing Jesus' love with little children. Many of them live shattered lives beyond our imagining. Planting the seeds of faith by teaching them about Jesus while they are still young may provide fruit beyond your wildest imagining! Anticipate a blessing as you learn the joy of what it means that "a little child shall lead them."

—Betty Veldman  
*International Coffee Break Director*



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## INTRODUCTION

Children are sometimes called the “leaders of tomorrow.” But is this description accurate? It suggests that their contribution to our world is yet to be realized and that it will occur at some point in the distant future.

Would Jesus agree with this description? Did he view children as bothersome little rug rats who need to “grow up” in order to contribute something important to life? The Bible tells us what Jesus thought of children. Jesus taught his disciples, “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. . . . See that you do not look down on one of these little ones” (Matthew 18:4-6, 10).

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Another time Jesus called the children to himself and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mark 10:14).

Make no mistake. By word and deed, Jesus showed his great love for children. “Let them come to me” are his words. But, you might ask, was Jesus speaking of two-year-olds or preschoolers? Demanding, talkative, nonstop bundles of energy? The answer is simple: Yes. These little ones, precious as they are, are even more precious in the sight of the Savior.

“Leaders of tomorrow?” If viewed through Jesus’ eyes, you might say that they really are “leaders of today.”

An evangelist once gave this report after an evangelistic message: “Today two and one-half people were saved.” When the listeners assumed that he meant two adults and one child, he responded, “Oh, no. Two children and one adult. Children have their whole lives ahead of them; adults, only half.”

What a beautiful perspective! That evangelist was able to see the value of a child. He was looking at children through the eyes of Jesus.

As a leader of a children’s ministry, you too place a high value on children. You recognize their importance and think they are worth your time and effort. You treasure your faith and desire to pass it on to the next generation. Perhaps your passion for children is contagious because you sense the urgency of little ones needing to know the truth. You understand that children are equal members of the household of faith. If you do not introduce them to your Savior, who will?

The ability to pass on one’s faith is more often caught than taught. The whole faith-building, maturing, growth process remains somewhat of a mystery. How does it begin? What is necessary to ensure its growth? What does a maturing faith look like? What are its fruits? These are some of the ques-

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tions we will struggle with in this booklet. Don't search for profound insights or deep answers. Rather, take some time to wonder a bit about children and their journey of faith. Hear their stories and sense the joy of their teachable moments. Allow yourself to be touched and changed by their honesty and trust.

This booklet is designed to be a tool for your ministry with children. Reading it will be a hands-on experience as we explore practical tips for growing faith. So pick up your gardening tools and put on your gloves—we're going out to tend a flower garden. Oh, yes, bring along your Walkman, because your exploration will begin with the song "Where It All Begins."

### **Where It All Begins**

Where does it all begin—  
That moment when we understand salvation?  
Where do we get the idea  
Of who he is and who we are?

And when do we first see him  
As more than mystery or imagination?  
When do we see that he knows us  
By our first name? Who shows us?

### *Chorus*

It begins in the heart of a mother  
Praying over her children each night.  
It begins with the love of a father  
Who shows us what the Father is like.

For God's children are never too big or too little  
To know him as Savior and Friend.  
You and I are given the greatest gift in Heaven—



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A chance to lead these little ones to him,  
For this is where it all begins.

When does it fall in place—  
The words we learn by memory each Sunday?  
When do his Words start to spring up,  
In the children that we bring up?

It begins when we live by his grace  
In the day-in and day-out of every Monday.  
One day when we least expect it  
They surprise us and reflect it.

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CHAPTER 1  
**SEED**

**E**very gardening experience begins with a seed. Most seeds are tiny, dry kernels that appear to be dead and of no significance. However, an amazing power is packed into each one.

In our word picture, the seed is the Word of God, the Bible. On the surface it appears to be a book much like other books in the library. There is nothing extraordinary to distinguish it. Yet the Bible is the greatest book ever written. It is filled with God's stories, a priceless library of stories that hold the key to our faith. In its entirety, the Bible stands as the one true beacon in a world of fantasy and falsehood.

The Bible is an intriguing book. Its story is as ancient as the stars, but as current and interesting as today's newspaper. Its characters stretch from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses to David to Daniel to Mary to Jesus to Peter, James, and John, to Paul. Ultimately those characters include men and women and boys and girls from every tribe and nation on

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earth. The Bible's story is vast, concluding only at the end of time. Yet in its pages we gain a glimpse of life in eternity. The Bible's message is for today, a message so personal that it touches people and changes lives in every age.

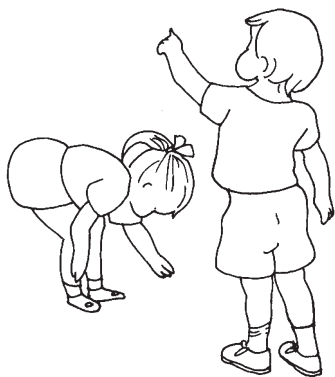
The first Bible stories young children often hear introduce them to the God who created the world. As children hear God's stories, God becomes real to them. They begin to discover that he knows them and loves them. Children are often able to enter those stories and wonder about the messages they hear. Then they begin to verbalize their faith in simple conversations with God.

"I love you, Jesus." "Please keep me safe." "Thank you for my food." These are simple, sincere expressions of faith.

Leaders who spend precious moments with little ones have the unique opportunity to hear these prayers. How often we adults forget to appreciate the impact of such holy times.

Sometimes we think that the Bible is too difficult for children to understand. Of course, some portions of the Bible are difficult even for adults to comprehend. But we must never assume that children cannot grasp the central truths of Bible stories if they are presented in an age-appropriate manner. When recounting stories from the Bible, always explain that the Bible is unlike any other book. It is God's Word to us. As they learn, children will begin to regard the Bible as a very important book and its stories as true.

Kathy always took great care every week to tell the children in her Story Hour group that the stories in the Bible were true. She was never sure, however, what lasting impres-



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sion she was making. Then one day a mother of one of Kathy's three-year-olds described something that had happened at home. The mother entered the room one morning while her small son was watching cartoons. "These stories on the TV aren't true, you know," three-year-old Danny told his mom. "Only God's stories are true!" Danny's mind and beliefs had been touched for all eternity.

When you hold the Word of God in your hands, allow the children to see that this book is precious to you. Help them to recognize the worth of God's stories. Create attractive visuals to give the story beauty and added value. The respect you give to God's Word will convey to the children how precious his stories are to you.

You may wonder if teaching stories of the faith to small children is worth the effort. After all, sowing the Word of God in children's hearts has not always been viewed as credible ministry. Do any of these statements sound familiar? "Anyone can teach kids." "It doesn't matter if you're prepared or not—kids don't know the difference." "Why should we put all the time and effort into kids?"

Such comments can only be made by someone who has not experienced the excitement and rewards of children's ministry. Just listen to children sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." Soon you'll catch the passion for child evangelism. That passion, instilled by the Holy

## TEACHING TIPS

- Always have an open Bible near you as you teach the story.
- Point to the story in the Bible.
- Teach the children that everything God tells us is true. For example, miracles in the Bible really happened.
- Bring your story to life using creative visuals.
- Show that you love God's stories by treating the Bible with respect.
- Hug your Bible close to you and say, "My Bible is my favorite book."

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Spirit, will give you the energy and desire to unwrap God's stories with creativity and imagination.

As you stand at the edge of your flower garden, look at the seed in your hand. Recognize the potential bound up in each grain. Realize that the seed will not grow unless you plant it. Start by reading and meditating on the stories in God's Word. Internalize them for yourself; make them your stories. God's Word is the tiny seed sown in the fertile soil of a child's heart. It will surely grow into a flowering plant of great beauty. Happy planting!

*“As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower  
and bread for the eater,  
so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it”*  
(Isaiah 55:10-11).

## **Preparing to Teach**

- Spend personal time in God's Word.
- Don't assume you already know the story.
- Read the story from two or three versions of the Bible.
- Become familiar with the context of the story.
- Take ownership of the story by asking yourself:  
Why did God include this story in the Bible?  
Why is it important for me? for the children?  
Which character in the story would I like to be?  
What did the central characters see? Feel? Hear?

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CHAPTER 2  
**SOWER**

**A**sower plants seeds for growing. That's you! What a privilege you have. The creator of the universe has given you the seed of his stories to plant into the hearts and minds of his precious little children. Is there a better time to begin planting the Savior's love?

Picture a spring flower garden in full bloom. The magnificent beauty of the blossoms is there because someone took the time and effort to plant tiny flower seeds into fertile soil. Likewise, the Little Lambs/Story Hour leader is vitally important to the early spiritual growth of small children. If she does not plant the seed, it may never be planted.

Children today—even very young children—are bombarded with violent, immoral, and destructive messages. Many grow up in abusive homes where the parents, so consumed with their own problems, have nothing to give to their children. As a Little Lambs/Story Hour worker, you are the

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tool in God's hand to touch their world with his love as you model what is right and good.

As the sower of the seed, you may be the first adult to hold a particular child lovingly or to play peekaboo or patty-cake without watching the clock. You may be the first to sing "Jesus Loves Me" with a two-year-old or the first adult to treat a willful four-year-old with respect and affection. You may not only be the first adult to do these



things with some children; you may be the *only* one to do them. You may be the first one to look a small child in the eyes and say, "You are loved because God loves you!"

You may have some children in your Little Lambs/Story Hour program for five to six years, giving you the time to plant, nurture, and watch them grow. But you may also have a needy child in your care for only two weeks, and you'll just barely get time to plant the seed. What an awesome responsibility—and privilege!

For some people gardening is fun, relaxing, and stimulating. For others it is just plain hard work. Some have a gift for

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working with plants; they have a “green thumb,” we say. Others have to work hard, read gardening books, and learn from others before their gardens grow. In the same way, many Little Lambs/Story Hour leaders have a unique gift for working with children. God gifts us for the tasks he calls us to. If you have been called to work with children, you will feel energized and stimulated as you work.

Listen to the story of Nell Kamerman’s class of three- and four-year-olds from Story Hour of First Christian Reformed Church in Manhattan, Montana:

Our busy class was reviewing the story of the way sin came into God’s beautiful world. We know the story. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s rule. The beautiful creation was ruined. Pain and sadness came. (The children became so quiet, with long faces and sad eyes.) But God came to the garden. He found Adam and Eve. Then he spoke to the serpent, “Cursed are you . . . you will crawl on your belly and eat dust. The offspring of the woman (who is Jesus Christ) will crush your head. . . .”

Suddenly those sad faces lit up! Christopher jumped out of his chair. “Yes! Yes!” he shouted.

The whole class danced and cheered! Jesus has given the victory! Now I am the student—these little ones bringing the lesson. May my response of worship and praise be as exuberant, as spontaneous, and as honest as theirs.

What an uplifting experience!

Sowing seeds is no one-time exercise. Ask any farmer. It’s a task repeated year in and year out. And so it is in children’s ministry. You will tell some stories again and again. Although you will become very familiar with them, don’t lose the edge of excitement and wonder.

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After you have sown the seed, you will begin the long-term task of nurturing that seed. This usually requires a much longer commitment to the child. So it's important to find ways to remain faithful over the long haul. But let's be honest. A season of giving yourself in ministry to little ones will have its ups and downs, no matter how called, committed, and gifted you are. You will experience periods of excitement and energy, but you also will be visited by fatigue and self-doubt. These are the times when you must remember that the flower of your own faith needs nurturing too. You must stay close to Jesus, letting him nurture you so that you can share him with others.

It's also important to encourage your coworkers in Little Lambs/Story Hour. Meeting together, laughing and having fun, retreating, crying together, sharing experiences, and going to seminars are all ways to build each other up.

Team teaching is a wonderful way to give and receive support, lighten the load, and maximize God's gifts. For example, a three-year-old class may have a team of three workers—one who loves working with crafts, one with a passion for storytelling, and one who is creative with songs and finger plays. Each team member contributes within her gifted realm. She won't be required to do it all just because it's "her turn." Jesus used this approach as he dispatched his disciples two-by-two for ministry. In his missionary journeys, Paul took a fellow worker. The bottom line is this: We can't do ministry alone. We need each other!

As you work with children, recognize God's unique ways of working in the lives of the little ones in your care. Try keeping a class journal. Each week jot down short entries of encouraging moments, struggles, prayers, answers to prayers, and so on. You might even include photographs of the children throughout the year. What a great way to look back and see what God has done!

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There are many roles for the sower and nurturer to play in Little Lambs/Story Hour. You may be a helper, nursery worker, teacher, piano player, set-up person, or one who prepares crafts or snacks. Whatever your role, allow the Lord to work through you. Ask him to expand your vision for what he can do in the lives of small children. Remember, God is not looking for confident experts to accomplish his work. He's looking for yielded, willing servants who recognize their own insufficiency and daily draw on his power and strength.

David Starr Jordan, former president of Stanford University, said, "There is nothing in the world so interesting as children, nothing so important. If you want to be of any real use in this world, do something for children."

Serving as a leader for Little Lambs/Story Hour is a high calling. If you are a seed planter and nurturer for young children, you are a valuable person. Never underestimate what God can do through you.

*"Your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost"* (Matthew 18:14).

## TEACHING TIPS

- Develop a strong devotional life, staying in close contact with Jesus.
- Seek refreshment and encouragement from seminars, retreats, Bible studies, and conventions.
- Stay healthy—eat, sleep, and exercise. Ministry requires energy!
- Keep a class journal of encouraging moments, struggles, answers to prayers, and so on.
- Team teach, if possible, and pray together.
- Share with coworkers ideas, experiences, and methods for consistent care.



## SUN

**T**he warmth of the sun reminds us of love—the love of God and the love of the caregiver.

In our solar system the sun is the source of light, heat, and energy for life on this planet. Without the life-sustaining properties of the sun, all life as we know it on planet Earth would cease. Think of your children's ministry. The love conveyed by a nursery worker or teacher has energy potential. In fact, love is the necessary ingredient for life and growth in all people. Psychiatrists say that infants left in a crib with no love or affection will die.

Our society is prone to loving itself, not others. And for many children, love is absent from their experience. They do not receive unconditional love from adults whom they know. Therefore, they have difficulty imagining that God, whom they *cannot* see, can be a source of love.

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You have a wonderful opportunity to be the hands of Jesus by demonstrating God's love to children. The love you express in many different ways will convince the children that your God is a God of love. Children often will learn to love their teachers before they love their teacher's God. Sometimes they will see Jesus in their teacher before they believe that he is real.

Love meets many needs. Although they may not be able to articulate it, children want stability, security, and affirmation. Unconditional love from an adult teacher or caregiver is the starting point for meeting those needs. Everyone, adult or child, possesses this strong hunger for love. A convicted murderer once said, "I'd rather be wanted for murder than not be wanted at all."



A Little Lambs/Story Hour setting is a prime place to create a warm, safe, cheery environment for the children's personalities to grow and flourish. Learning and development cannot take place in an atmosphere of fear. In fact, fear causes the depletion

of important chemicals in the brain. Godly love needs to warm the soil of a fearful, resistant child's heart before the seed can germinate and grow. This process can occur only in a safe, accepting environment where the children feel surrounded by the warmth of God's love.

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Children also need affirmation. They need to know that they are loved for who they are, not for who they think they should be.

Hank was a fearful preschooler who was afraid to enter his classroom. His defenses were up. He was determined not to like this place or the people in it. He cowered in the corner of the room and would not join the children for any group activities or stories.

I soon realized that any attempt to reach out to Hank would only make him more antagonistic. He was not only resistant but quite volatile.

As the children gathered on the floor in the story circle, I suggested that we leave a space in the circle for Hank. We created an area on the circle that we called "Hank's place." The other children were eager to reach out to him in this way.

I then spoke to Hank, who was cowering in a corner across the room. I said, "Hank, look here. There is a place for you in the circle. There will always be a place for you when you're ready to join us. You may stay where you are, but we all want you to know that you are always welcome, and your space will always be ready."

Each week at story time, we went through the same procedure. Hank cowered in the corner while the children and I made space for him. I would then tell him that his space was waiting for him when he was ready.

For three weeks the process seemed to have no impact. Then on the fourth week, I noticed that during story time Hank began to edge his way closer to the story circle. Imagine the lump in my

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throat and the tears in my eyes when, on the sixth week at story time, Hank joined the story circle and wanted to sit right by me! Love and acceptance had broken down the walls of hostility. We were on the edge of a relationship that would grow to be very special.

Every garden plant or flower has its own requirements for growth. If you have time and a few packages of flower seeds, take a moment to read the growing instructions. A few examples may read like this:

- Choose a location with full sun to part shade.
- Select a location with full sun.
- Plant only in shaded areas.
- Partial sun will provide the best conditions.
- Plants may stop blooming during summer heat but will start again when cooler weather returns.

Isn't it interesting to note that each plant flourishes under its own unique conditions? Children are like that too. Some children respond to overt demonstrations of love. Some hold back and are suspicious of a hug or a tender touch. These responses are shaped both by their home environment and by their individual personality. Each child responds differently. And each child should be respected and loved for who he or she is.

The caregiver's challenge is to discover what makes each child tick. What conditions would most benefit Julie or Joshua? What makes them smile and respond? What causes them to withdraw? Hank, for example, would not have responded to a touch or outward demonstration of love. But he did respond to an approach that I had never used before. (It was a valuable learning experience for me.) God taught me to love as he loves, and he allowed me to be there for Hank when the barriers came down. What a privilege it was!

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Perhaps you might take a moment right now to ask God to make you sensitive to the needs of each of your children. Bring them to his attention by name. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you see beyond the outward appearance of each child and be able to recognize his or her heart needs.

Lay yourself open before the Lord and become teachable. Allow God to surprise you with creative moments of insight. Trust that his love will flow through you to stimulate growing conditions suitable for any kind of child.

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight”* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

## TEACHING TIPS

- Learn the names of the children and call them by name, showing that you value them as people.
- Physically stoop to their level. Look them in the eye as you talk to them. Smile warmly. Touch gently. Use a calming tone of voice.
- Affirm the value of each child. Compliment each child at least one time each session. Say, for example, “It was very kind of you to share that toy, Michelle.”
- Be flexible.
- Be observant. Read the children’s body language and respond appropriately.
- Tell the children that you enjoy being with them.
- Listen to their stories.
- Create a safe environment by enforcing protective measures against abuse, contagious disease, and so on.



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CHAPTER 4  
**WATER**

**W**ater is necessary for seeds to germinate and grow. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is necessary for the seeds of faith to grow. We often think that young children are unable to bear testimony to their faith. But it is be-coming increasingly evident that small children do encounter God and can express what that encounter means to them. This is the working of the Holy Spirit. The teacher must assume a supportive role, giving space for the work that only the Holy Spirit can accomplish.

The Spirit also is the one who brings life to the stories, who convinces children (and adults) that those stories are true. It's the Spirit who initiates the child's authentic response and who brings the moment of understanding when all you can do is stand back and say, "Aha! It's the working of God!"

"Aha!" moments are wonderful, aren't they? When we were preparing to write this booklet, we asked you for your stories

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about children. Several of you sent us your “Aha!” moments. Here are stories of one sacred moment after another. Read them and smile, be encouraged, and know that the Spirit is working!

We were finishing a Story Hour series on Christ’s death and resurrection. Our story for the day was Christ’s ascension into heaven. Three-year-old Nathan asked, “Where is heaven?” Struggling with how to convey an honest, accurate answer, I replied, “I don’t really know. It’s out there somewhere.” I explained that Jesus and God are there and so is my grandmother and that I would be there someday after I died. Immediately Jonathan, whose grandfather had recently passed away, said, “My grandpa is there too.” Then Laura added that her grandma is there. We had the most wonderful time wondering and sharing about heaven!



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The two-year-olds were listening to the story of the good shepherd. We had just gotten to the part where the lamb was going through the dark, scary places. The children were very attentive, and when I asked if they’d ever been

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afraid, Stevie said with big eyes, “Yeah, of the funder (thunder!)” Another child quickly said he was afraid of the dark. It was clear they understood fear and were ready to hear that Jesus is with them, even in the thunder and the dark.

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Our class of two-year-olds was sitting in a circle, singing and playing musical instruments. One of the children, Tyler, was born with Down’s syndrome. He was very observant in the class, but he did not speak. As the children were having fun singing and playing, I noticed a huge smile on Tyler’s face. Suddenly he opened his mouth and let out a loud noise, surprising everyone. Even the children recognized it as a very special moment of authentic praise!

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Kathy told the Easter story at the foot of the cross in the church sanctuary. As the class got up and started to walk downstairs to their room, one child grabbed her hand. It was his first year in Story Hour. He hadn’t been to church very often, but he looked at her and said, “You know, he didn’t have to let them do that to him.” Kathy agreed. The child continued, “When he was on that cross, he had the power to come down again.” Again Kathy agreed and remembered that she had not mentioned that

#### TEACHING TIPS

- Pray and believe that the Holy Spirit will work.
- Encourage a response to the Holy Spirit’s work, but do not manipulate the children.
- Give the children room to wonder and explore the concept of God.
- Stand back and watch the Spirit’s work. Allow him to surprise you.

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in the story that morning. “That must have hurt a whole bunch!” the little boy continued. “You know, he sure must love us!” A very special moment of refreshment.

As you continue to interact with children, pray that you will recognize evidence of new growth as the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of your children. Then stand back and watch for those precious “Aha!” moments that are sure to come.

*“The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail” (Isaiah 58:11).*

## FERTILIZER AND INSECTICIDE

**T**here must be prayer. Empowering prayer is necessary for spiritual growth. Preventive prayer will thwart destructive outside forces.

Prayer has always been a priority in the Coffee Break/Little Lambs/Story Hour ministry. For an excellent resource on prayer, refer to the Core Values series booklet called *The Priority of Prayer*, by Edi Bajema. This booklet thoroughly explores how to use prayer effectively in your ministry.

Just as fertilizer aids in the growth of a plant, prayer is a powerful stimulant for growth in the heart of a child. We humans cannot work spiritual miracles. We cannot create “Aha!” moments in children’s lives. But God can. And if we believe that God hears and answers our prayers (which he does!), then we must ask for the Holy Spirit’s help in every-

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thing we do. Hear Jesus' promise to you: "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:14).

Prayer must also be your defense against Satan. Just as harmful insects can attack and destroy a healthy plant, Satan desires to ruin your efforts to plant and nurture God's seeds of truth. Your children's ministry has eternal consequences. It is an opportunity to connect young children spiritually to their Creator and begin them on the path of growing in Christ. You can be sure that Satan and his evil forces will not give them up so easily. Our battle for these little ones is "not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"

(Ephesians 6:12).

The devil has many tactics to keep a child from Little Lambs/Story Hour. In fact, he is so crafty and clever that we can never know all of his tricks. It's important for us to be aware of Satan's attacks, but thank God we don't have to be afraid of them. God has given us the victory through the blood of Jesus. We need to claim each child for him.

Cover your Little Lambs/Story Hour ministry with protective prayers. Pray each week for each leader and child in your class. Your prayer time may be the place where the battle is won or lost for the soul of a child. Prayer is your most powerful weapon. Use it!



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In addition to praying as leaders, we also must teach children how to pray. If you can teach a child to pray, you have given her a gift that will last a lifetime. She will have a name to call on in any situation of life.

Jana first heard about God in Little Lambs/Story Hour. Her single, inner-city mom allowed her to develop a relationship with a Christian family. Since then, this dysfunctional mother sporadically cut off the relationship for various (illogical) reasons. Jana's life is very unstable, and her future is uncertain. But she has learned to pray. Even though she may be cut off from the church, she knows how to call on God's name for help.

And remember Betty's little friend, Cameron, from the foreword of this booklet? He said to her, "When I'm afraid in the dark, I pray, 'Dear Jesus, please be with me,' and then I'm not afraid anymore."

What a testimony! You give children a wonderful gift when you teach them to pray.

*"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective"* (James 5:16, NRSV).

## TEACHING TIPS

- Pray personally for each child. Write their names on a bookmark in your Bible.
- Pray together as a teaching team.
- Enlist the aid of a faithful prayer warrior.
- When you pray with a child, use words they understand.
- Teach a simple prayer that your children can memorize. Then encourage the children to add their own thoughts.
- Try a circle prayer or "popcorn prayer" with a group of children ages four or older.
- Discuss prayer requests first and then allow the children time to pray. Assure them that God can hear their prayers whether they speak aloud, or whisper, or even just think their prayers in their head. (God has great ears!)
- Encourage each child to find a special place at home to be alone with God.



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CHAPTER 6  
**PRUNING**

**H**ow does pruning relate to children's ministry? Doesn't that stretch the metaphor just a bit? Not really. The dictionary defines pruning this way: "to remove dead or living parts from a plant so as to increase flower production or improve the form." Pruning is a type of discipline. Again, the dictionary defines discipline as "training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency." The end result of pruning is not unlike the goal of discipline.

*Discipline* reminds us of the word *disciple*, or one who learns. This suggests that discipline is necessary to create an environment conducive for learning. We've already said that children grow and learn best when they feel safe and loved. Loving discipline creates the healthy boundaries needed for that kind of environment. Just as a plant grows best after undergoing careful pruning, so children thrive best when they sense that there is a consistent structure for learning.

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We live in a society that produces children with many developmental and social problems. We will have youngsters in Little Lambs/Story Hour with ADD, ADHD, fetal alcohol syndrome, and

other emotional and behavioral disorders. As teachers and caregivers, we face some difficult challenges, and we may not be trained to handle some of them. When necessary, we must be willing to seek additional help and support. (See guidelines below and

Recommended Resources on page 66.)



But first let's talk about your expectations for your class. You may have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish with your three-year-old Little Lambs session next year. You have read the curriculum and are excited about having a *perfect* class! You imagine several children playing quietly at each center during playtime, occasionally interacting with one another in a friendly way. You envision them all eagerly singing together in Circle Time, carefully eating their snack, and then sitting attentively with eyes glued to you as you tell the story.

This may describe how your class behaves—occasionally. But more often than not you have a Johnny or Joanie who

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refuses to participate quietly in *any* of the activities. In fact, she doesn't walk, she runs; he doesn't sit, he sprawls on the floor; she doesn't drink her juice, she pours it on her neighbor. When this child leaves at the end of class, you let out a big breath and exclaim, "Whew! We made it!" If you've worked with young children, you can relate!

But don't be discouraged by this picture. Scores of other Little Lambs/Story Hour teachers have experienced classroom mayhem and survived. Remember, too, that each child is unique, and so is each situation. For that reason there are no set rules for creating a disciplined learning environment. However, some general guidelines may be of help:

- Before your season begins, discuss with all the staff how you plan to handle difficult situations. When problems arise during the year, openly talk about them, pray about them, and try to work them out together.
- Children need rules, but rules should be few and easily understood. You can regain control of a chaotic situation by repeating short phrases.
- Loving consistency is key—always keep the welfare of the child in mind. Sufficient staffing is also important. One adult cannot be expected to handle a class of ten two- or three-year-olds. You may need to add an extra helper for that one difficult child.
- And, if your class picture is as perfect as the first one we painted, you may need to add a small dose of reality, mix in plenty of flexibility and creativity, and include some laughter and fun. After all, you are working with children!

You may have children like Robert in your class. Robert was a two-year-old twin with a drug- and alcohol-addicted father, an abused mother, a baby brother, and little love or support in his young life. Robert was sometimes uncontrol-

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lable and always in need of love and affection. Robert regularly attended Little Lambs, and his teachers hoped that he would behave like an angel by the end of the year. But he didn't. He had moments of good behavior and attentiveness during class, and he did seem to make some progress. But Robert's home life continued to be chaotic, and his future was quite uncertain. Even with consistent, loving boundaries established by Little Lambs caregivers, Robert's behavior remained unpredictable and sometimes out of control.

The job of pruning/discipline is hard work. It's not easy to be consistent with a group of busy, wiggly two-year-olds. You may expend a lot of energy and see no dramatic results. But remember that the "Roberts" of this world desperately need the loving, disciplined environment that you can create for them. Pray for the energy to persevere, and when you've done your best, relax and let God do the rest.

*"It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).*

## TEACHING TIPS

- Consistency is the key when working with young children. Keep as many things as consistent as possible.

**Staff:** Does the child see a familiar face each week or is there always a new teacher in the classroom?

**Classroom:** Does the layout of the classroom remain the same from week to week?

**Rules:** Clearly explain some simple rules at your first session and then consistently, lovingly enforce them.

**Structure:** Do you follow the same basic routine each week? A child finds security in knowing what to expect.

- Use a short phrase or simple signal to get everyone's attention and to quiet the room. For example, hold up one finger to indicate silence or say, "Let's see if we can make silence together." Wait a minute and then say, "Listen to the silence."

## BUD

**A**fter the soil is prepared and the seed is sown, the seed germinates and develops into a beautiful, tender plant. Soon we begin to see another evidence of life—the appearance of blossom buds. In your Little Lambs/Story Hour garden, these buds represent faith beginning to take shape in a child.

A bud is a small swelling of the plant from which a flower develops. Not only does it announce something to come, but it is itself a thing of beauty.

We have seen that children's ministry is a seed-planting ministry. The gardener faithfully sows the seed, nurtures the plant, and waits patiently for visible signs of fruit. The budding of the plants generates a sense of excitement and wonder in the gardener. Something—growth—is happening. All the work of nurturing and caring for the plants has not been in vain.

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As a teacher or caregiver, you too will experience the excitement and wonder of developing faith in the lives of your children. The joy will remain with you for a long time. You will look on these experiences as true “Aha!” moments.

Since the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of children at different age levels, we must not impose any restrictions on the Spirit’s timetable. True Christian faith often becomes visible in very young children; we must not assume that a young child cannot evidence such faith. Even as each child develops physically according to his or her own genetic blueprint, so also each one touched by the Spirit will develop according to the time frame set by the Spirit of God.

Remember Tyler, the five-year-old boy with Down’s syndrome? When we were sitting in the circle at prayer time, I asked the children if anyone had a prayer request. Some children contributed their requests, and Tyler also spoke up. He said something, but I was not able to understand him.

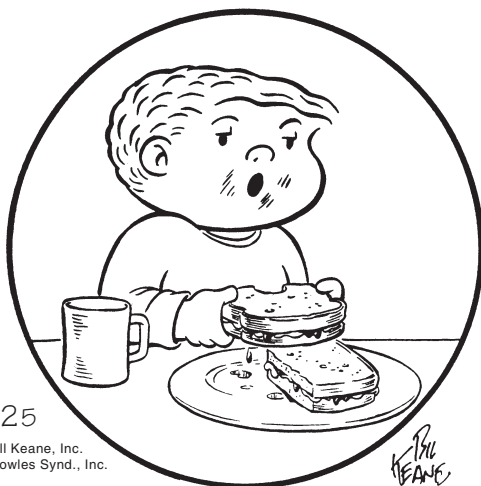


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Rather than asking him to repeat it, I said, “Tyler, when we start doing a circle prayer, will you pray for your prayer request?”

Tyler responded by nodding his head. I wasn’t sure if he understood what I was asking of him, but we started our circle prayer. When it was Tyler’s turn, my questions were answered. He started praying, again in a language I could not understand, but I have no doubt that God understood. I caught a few words like “school” and “baby,” but the prayer was obviously a conversation between Tyler and God.

Here was faith in the budding stage. As I opened my eyes to watch Tyler pray, I was moved to tears when I saw him, eyes pinched shut and face raised toward heaven. I have no doubts about Tyler’s faith. He is a child of the King.



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“If God lives inside us like  
Grandma says, I hope He likes  
peanut butter and jelly.”

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It's fun to watch faith take shape in a child. Children are so trusting. They take what you say very literally, and, like sponges, soak up information from all of their senses. They comprehend at their level and process new information over a period of time. Young children can and do experience God's presence before they are able to verbalize it. They marvel at God's works in nature, comforting caregivers, soothing music, or even silence. As their teacher, you have the privilege of watching for evidence that your children are not just hearing the Word but are also responding to it.

Kathy was Mei Le's teacher in a three-year-old Story Hour. At the end of the season, Mei Le's mother wrote to Kathy:

Dear Kathy,

I've been thinking about how much Mei Le has learned in Story Hour. Every Wednesday I ask her about her lesson and craft. Often she doesn't offer very much about the lesson, but as the week progresses I find out so much—all in bits and pieces, of course.

For example, one day this week I reprimanded Mei Le for something she had done wrong. She was very quick to respond that God loved her very much even when she was naughty. I asked where she learned that and she said, "Story Hour."

Another night this week we were praying together and Mei Le thanked God for protecting her. When we finished praying, I asked her what "protect" meant and she said that God takes care of her. Again, this came from your instruction.

Then one day she sang a beautiful song from beginning to end—"Mr. Satan knocks at my heart's door."

I wrote the whole song down from her instructions

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so that I can teach it to my second graders. I think about my daughter—that two years ago she could not even speak one word of English, and now she’s fluent with her vocabulary and she’s got that “wonderful faith of a little child.” I want to thank you and tell you that Mei Le’s faith has grown because of you. Children, especially little ones, learn so much, but they don’t have the instant recall or vocabulary necessary to share what they’ve learned, so they say it over a longer period of time and in different ways . . . as Mei Le did. Thanks and thanks!

Cathi

Faith at an early age resembles a beautiful swelling bud. It is innocent and holy. It may be evident in a smile, a hug, or in eyes filled with wonder and expectation. Those are precious moments . . . moments to be recorded and shared. God gives those glimpses of faith when we as teachers need them most. What a confirmation it was for Kathy to receive the note of thanks from Mei Le’s mother. It was a moment of affirmation which made all the effort worthwhile.

A rabbi was once asked by a pupil concerning Deuteronomy 6:6 (“And these words which I command thee

## TEACHING TIPS

- Children’s first expressions of faith will be very simple—although sometimes profound—and may not be theologically correct. Take time to reinforce, on their level, correct understandings of God and his ways. Allow children the time and space to process this information.
- Children enjoy expressing themselves through artwork. They may create pictures of their faith. The color yellow often expresses joy. A semi-circle can indicate a sign of protection, security, and trust. The color black is often used when a child feels fear and danger. Ask each child to tell you about the picture he or she draws. The artwork of very young children is often difficult for adults to “read.”

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this day shall be upon thy heart,” RSV), “Why are we told to put these words *upon* our hearts and not *in* our hearts?”

The rabbi answered the pupil by saying, “It is not within man’s power to place the divine teachings directly in his heart. All that we can do is place them on the surface of the heart so that when the heart breaks they will drop in.”

You cannot predict what lies ahead in the lives of the little ones you teach. That is not your responsibility. Your task is clear—to place the divine teachings, the seed of the Word, on the surface of the hearts of little children. In God’s timing, the seed drops in, germinates, and grows. Buds of faith will form. It is the mysterious work of God.

Celebrate these precious moments. They are miracles indeed!

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time”* (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

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CHAPTER 8  
**ROOTS**

**A**s young children grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually, they need sturdy roots, reaching deep into their hearts, to hold them secure. We live in a world of chaos and change. With no spreading root system, a child is at the mercy of the world's confusion. She needs to have a simple conviction that what she has learned about God is really true. That God can be trusted. That he will not change. That he will go with her day after day into her future. Otherwise she will be adrift, searching for people or things she can trust, only to be disappointed by them.

These roots are hidden in the life of the child of God; only God sees them. The roots grow and develop slowly as a child learns about God and understands that he is real. The roots become stronger when the child begins to experience spiritual stability and begins to trust a God who will not change.

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Think of the world in which our children are growing up today—a world careening down a path of change at ever-increasing speeds. Television and video games are raising the children of today; technology supplies them with “virtual reality,” where reality and fantasy are nearly indistinguishable. Basic relationships in families, in marriages, and in communities are often broken or severely strained. American families are on the move as never before, forcing children to adjust to several homes during adolescence. Rootlessness is rampant in our society.

How do we as Little Lambs/Story Hour teachers give children something to hang on to, something to believe in? Fortunately, it’s the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts of the children. He is

the one who creates the rooting connections that provide stability. If we’re busy planting the seeds, we can be sure that the Spirit is busy rooting the child.



While that truth gives us confidence, it should not make us complacent. We need to know our children and understand the messages that are influencing them. Are they learning from Barney or Michael Jackson? Sesame Street or MTV? Jump rope and marbles or video games and afternoon talk shows? The world is not the same today as it was when we were young. In fact, it’s *very* different. So we need to ask repeatedly, How can we bring the unchanging truth of God’s Word in new and fresh ways that

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will speak to the needs of children today? Do we need to change our approach to children's ministry? What methods no longer work? What do we need to do differently? What can stay the same?

This is a huge challenge. But do you sense the urgency of it? These children need God! They need the rootedness of a growing and secure relationship with the living God. We can barely imagine the storms facing many of them. Yet these are the children God has given us. They are the next generation, and they need to know in their hearts that God is real, that he can give them hope for the future.

*"Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit"* (Jeremiah 17:7-8, NRSV).

#### TEACHING TIPS

- These roots will grow through difficult times in a child's life. Use the hard times to help the child experience the truth that God will never leave her. A child shaken by a broken home, for example, needs to know the constancy of God's love.
- Seek practical ways to support the positive aspects of the child's home life. Work with the child's parents or guardians to promote as much stability as possible in the child's life.



## FULL BLOOM

**I**s there anything more beautiful, more colorful, more intricate than a flowering plant in full bloom? Is there anything more miraculous, more humbling, more delicate than watching the faith of a child unfold into a lifelong walk with the Savior?

The blossoming flower has the power to draw your eyes—and your nose—to its beauty. That’s what the faith of a child is like—it is so honest and real that it attracts others. It is so transparent that the simple truths of the gospel shine through. A child’s faith is free of adult inhibitions; a child will readily tell others what he knows to be true about God.

Children become ambassadors for God as they carry his stories and his love back to their families. Often a child’s enthusiasm for Little Lambs/Story Hour will keep a tired mom coming to her Bible study. Dads and grandparents will enter a church building for the first time to watch their child

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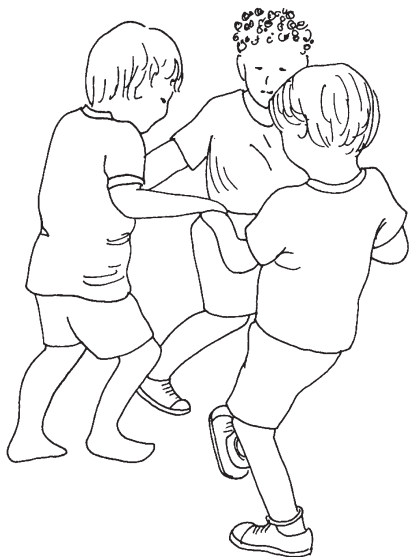
in the Christmas program. Children can teach their families how to pray at mealtimes. They can witness enthusiastically in public places like grocery stores and banks as they sing their favorite Little Lambs/Story Hour songs at full volume.

Claudia tells the following story of how one child shared his faith with a friend:

Two of my Story Hour pupils, Jonathan, 5, and Tyler, 4, were finishing their craft after

our story time. The application of the story dealt with inviting Christ into your life. The two boys were alone at the table having a very active discussion. I felt it would be best not to interfere with their discussion.

Tyler told Jonathan that it was impossible to have Jesus come into your heart. It was obvious that this concept was too abstract for him. Jonathan was very distressed that his friend could not understand. He told Tyler the whole process of inviting Jesus into your life. His last statement was that you just ask him and he comes in. It's just magic! Tyler said he still didn't think it was possible.



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I was very touched by Jonathan's concern for Tyler and by Tyler's honest questioning.

We may not always be fortunate enough to see a child's faith blossom. Laura, for example, was four years old when she first came to Story Hour. After some time, Laura left and the children's ministry leaders lost touch with her. Twenty years later, Laura returned to the church and asked the pastor to perform her marriage ceremony. She and her fiancé married, and joined the church; and Laura signed up to work in Story Hour. This is a true story of a woman who returned to the very place where she had heard about Jesus, only to commit herself to service and ministry to others.

Little children will not only attract others to Christ through their simple witness, they will also minister to us as teachers if we allow them. Their joy, their smiles, their bright eyes, their hugs, their dependence, and their desire to learn can teach us a great deal. Jesus said we all need to become like children in order to enter his kingdom. Thank God he continues to work in us to make us more childlike, more beautiful, and more ready for his kingdom every day.

*"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 1:6).

## **How to Lead a Child to Christ**

Adults ordinarily are unable to determine whether very young children are genuinely responding to the message of Jesus' love or simply parroting their teacher and looking for approval. That shouldn't keep you from giving your little ones the opportunity to respond to Christ, however. Trust God to work in his timing and in his way. Acknowledge that any child's response of faith will be on that child's level of understanding, but honor its reality. Sometimes as adults we can become so caught up in theories of childhood development that we forget God is not bound by those theories. Never lose

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the wonder of how the Holy Spirit can work in the life of a child.

Whenever possible, use visuals to help with the steps of leading a child to Christ. For example, the Bible story craft in Unit 6 of the Story Hour curriculum is an excellent visual tool for explaining God's plan from creation to eternity.

Explain each symbol with simple, clear statements such as:

**Round circle world**—"God made the world and the first two people, Adam and Eve."

**Sad face**—"On the saddest day they disobeyed God. Now everyone would do wrong things called sin."

**Heart**—"But God still loved us. He made a way to forgive our sins."

**Manger**—"He sent his son, Jesus, as a baby. We remember this at Christmas."

**Cross and empty tomb**—"When Jesus grew up to be a man, he died on the cross to forgive our sins. On Easter, he came back to life."

**Happy face**—"If we believe in what Jesus did for us, we can love God and be happy forever."

Consider meeting individually with your older Story Hour children to explain the plan of salvation. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you sense their readiness. Offer to help them pray a prayer of commitment if you feel they have that desire. You may use this prayer: *"Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that you are a good and perfect God. I know that you love me and that you died on the cross to pay for my sins and to make my heart clean. I am sorry for my sins, and I want to show you that I love you by the way I live. I want to grow to know you better. Thank you for loving me. I love you. Amen."*

"The Wordless Book" is another effective tool that has been used for many years.

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## **Connecting to the Home**

Children often become little missionaries in their home when they convince mom to attend Coffee Break or when they teach their families to pray at mealtimes. Look for ways to keep connected with the home:

- Plan special programs or worship services in which the Little Lambs/Story Hour children sing. Invite parents and grandparents to attend.
- Maintain regular contact with the home by sending a note or parent letter with each child.
- Send a postcard that says, "We missed you!" to each child who misses a Little Lambs/Story Hour session.
- Send birthday cards to your Little Lambs/Story Hour children.
- Add your Little Lambs/Story Hour families to your church mailing list to inform them of your church's ministries and activities.



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## CONCLUSION

**W**ell, here you have it. A seed, a flower. A story, a child. The seed can become a flowering plant only if someone plants it. The Bible story will never change the life of a child unless someone tells it.

When we began writing this booklet, we wondered what we could offer other teachers in children's ministry. We are not experts, but we are seasoned a bit from experience. Our main goal has been simple: to communicate a passion for reaching children with the love of Christ.

Workers active in children's ministry sometimes get bogged down with their daily tasks. It's easy to get discouraged and wonder if all the effort makes a difference. Let us assure you that yes, it does make a difference. It makes an eternal difference. God has put you in your place of ministry to make a difference in a child's life. If, at the end of your life,

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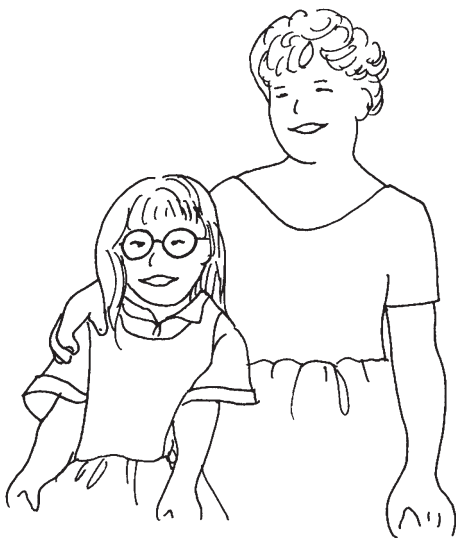
you can look back and see the faces of all the children whose lives you've touched, wouldn't it be worth it?

But are young children more important than grown-ups? By no means. The gospel is the same message of salvation to the ninety-three-year-old as it is to the three-year-old. In human terms, however, the three-year-old has a lifetime to make a difference for God. And that's how the world will be changed—when we all, and especially the little ones we teach, spend a lifetime telling others about Jesus.

Now it's time for a reality check. You may be convinced of the importance of children's ministry, but you are not sure you're up to the task. Neither was Joshua. But God said to him, as he says to you, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD

your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). Imagine Jesus standing beside you next time you're overwhelmed and exhausted. Ask him for the strength to keep going, and then watch how he surprises you as he helps you carry the load.

There is joy in this journey of working with children, so make sure you have fun. It requires honesty and simplicity, so be real. There is life-changing potential in your work, so



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stay close to God. There is plenty of love available, so enjoy the embrace. Hold the children you work with close to your heart—both with your arms and with your prayers. Picture Jesus as your coworker, the loving shepherd who “gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart” (Isaiah 40:11).

This booklet began by asking: Where does it all begin? We conclude with that question, hoping that you have a fuller understanding of the answer.

Where does it all begin—  
That moment when we understand salvation?  
Where do we get the idea  
Of who he is and who we are?

It begins when we live by his grace  
In the day-in and day-out of every Monday.  
One day when we least expect it  
They surprise us and reflect it.

For God’s children are never too big or too little  
To know him as Savior and Friend.  
You and I are given the greatest gift in Heaven—  
A chance to lead these little ones to him,  
For this is where it all begins.

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## **Recommended Resources**

*The Priority of Prayer* by Edi Bajema explains why any effective evangelistic ministry must be rooted in active prayer. Available from CRC Publications, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. Call toll-free 1-800-333-8300 (U.S.) or 1-800-263-4252 (Canada).

The introduction to the Little Lambs curriculum (both year one and year two) offers tips on “Handling Behavior Problems in the Classroom.” This is age appropriate for two- and three-year-olds. Make copies available for all of your Little Lambs staff.

*1-2-3 Magic* is an excellent resource for coping with difficult children. Available as a two-hour video or book from Child Management, Inc., 800 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137. Call toll-free 1-800-44CHILD.

*Fidget Busters: 101 Quick Attention-Getters for Children’s Ministry* by Jolene L. Roehlkepartain is a complete source for attention-getter ideas. Available from Group Publishing, Inc., Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539. Call toll-free 1-800-447-1070.



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Children's ministry is like flower gardening. There are seeds to be sown, young plants to be nurtured and pruned, tiny buds to be protected, and full blossoms to bring joy and wonder. And it begins with someone like you who is called and equipped for ministry to young children.

*Little Ones Need Jesus* offers wisdom from two seasoned Little Lambs/Story Hour teachers plus practical teaching tips and recommended resources to enhance and enable your children's ministry.

The Core Values series reinforces the principles and practices necessary for Coffee Break leaders to experience the fruit of the Spirit and the joy of the harvest.

Other titles in this series include *The Priority of Prayer* by Edith Bajema and *Linking to the Lost* by Donna Vander Griend.



A Ministry of CRC Publications

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Grand Rapids, MI 49560

3475 Mainway  
Burlington, ON L7M 1A9

ISBN 1-56212-162-6