



## OFFERING THE GREATEST GIFT CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

### MINISTRY DIRECTION

*Why provide opportunities for children to receive the gift of salvation?*

- 85% of all Christians were saved between the ages of 4 and 11.
- It is the Father's will that every child be saved (Matthew 18:14).
- A soul saved in childhood offers years of Christian service and fruit bearing.

*What Bible truths will encourage the child to receive the gift of salvation?*

- God's love for the child. John 3:16
- The nature of sin and the need of the child.  
Isaiah 53:6 gives a simple definition of the nature of sin. Sin is choosing to go your own way instead of following God's way.  
Romans 3:23 shows the child his personal need for a Savior by clearly stating that "all have sinned."
- The work of Jesus Christ. Romans 5:8. Christ, who lived a sinless life, chose to die for us when we were still sinful and disobedient.
- God's requirement for salvation. I John 1:9, John 3:36, Acts 3:19. God's only requirement is that we admit our sinfulness and believe in Jesus as our Savior from sin.
- Assurance. I John 1:9, John 1:12, Acts 3:19. When we admit our sinfulness and accept Jesus as our Savior, God forgives and cleanses. We have this assurance through God's Word.

*How do I invite the child to receive the gift of salvation?*

- State the invitation clearly; briefly reviewing the plan of salvation.
- Depend on the Holy Spirit's convicting. "If the Holy Spirit convicts, the child will make a lasting decision."
- Don't emphasize fear.
- Share a verse with the child that contains God's condition and the promise of salvation. Acts 16:31, Romans 10:13 and I John 1:9 are verses that clearly state both the condition and the promise.
- Give instructions. How do you want the child to respond to your invitation? Do you want him to stay after dismissal for individual counseling? Do you want him to come forward for immediate counseling?

*How do I guide the child to receive the gift of salvation?*

- Determine WHY he responded to the invitation with the question, "What would you like Jesus to do to for you right now!"
- Help him understand his need. What is sin? It is going our own way instead of following God's ways. What is God's punishment for sin? Romans 3:23 says "the wages of sin is death (separation from God)."
- Help him understand God's plan. God made a way for your sins to be forgiven. What did He do?
- Encourage the child to pray. If he does not feel he can pray alone, you may help him form a prayer, line by line.
- Give the child assurance of his salvation. When the child finishes praying avoid saying, "Now you're saved!" Let his assurance come from the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Ask, "What did Jesus do for you?" Use the same salvation verse used in the invitation to assure him that his sins are forgiven and he has received God's gift.

## **IDEAS YOU CAN USE!**

*The Changing Heart*

**PREPARATION:** Cut a large heart-shaped hole in the center of the front side of a 10x13 brown envelope. Glue a black sheet of construction paper to the inside of the back of the envelope. When the glue is dry, make sure the red and white sheets will slip through the top of the brown envelope, making the heart appear white or red.

**PRESENTATION:** When you looked in the mirror this morning, what did you see? Yes, you saw yourself. You saw if your face was washed, if your hair was combed, and if your shirt was buttoned correctly. If you looked carefully, you could even see if your teeth were well brushed.

But could you see inside your body? No. The doctor can see some things inside your body using X-rays. He can see a broken bone or a coin you might have accidentally swallowed. Can anyone see the real you, the part of you that is happy or sad, jealous or content? In the Bible, that part of you is called your heart. Only God can look into your heart. What do you suppose you would see if you could take a look in your heart as God does? (Hold up the large brown envelope, with the stained, dark heart showing.)

Every heart is filled with the darkness of sin. The Bible tells us that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). The Bible also tells us that the punishment for sin is death. You could never enter Heaven if your heart was dark with sin. Even though God loves you, He cannot allow sin to enter Heaven. (pick up the red sheet of paper, with the white sheet carefully hidden beneath it. Do not allow the children to see the white sheet, only the red.)

However, God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for our sins. Do any of you know John 3: 16? (Encourage the children to say the

Scripture verse with you.) Yes, Jesus came to take away our sins. When He died on the cross, His blood was given to wash away our sins. The Bible tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin" (1 John 1:9). What can we do so that Jesus' blood covers and cleanses our sinful hearts? Yes, we can ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins. (Insert the red sheet, making sure the white sheet is behind it. Now the heart-shaped hole will be red.)

When we invite Jesus to come, His blood washes away our sins. He makes us a new person--a Christian. That means that we can be like Christ because He is living with us. (Carefully remove the red sheet, leaving the white sheet in place. The heart will appear white.)

When we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He cleanses our hearts! What does God see in your heart today? Has your heart been made clean by Jesus' death on the cross? Have you asked Him to forgive your sins?

### *I Confess*

PREPARATION: Pennies and red permanent markers are the materials needed. Give each child five pennies. Have children sit in a circle on the floor with you.

PRESENTATION: We're going to play a game called "Confession." As we go around the circle, each one will tell something you've done wrong that you think others may have done also, such as told a lie or been unkind to a friend. When you name your sin, throw a penny into the center of the circle. If anyone else has ever done that sin, throw one of your pennies into the center of the circle also. (Continue until everyone has had a chance to name a sin. Everyone's pennies should be gone.)

What did you learn from this activity? What are some things you have done to try to keep from sinning? (Let the children read Romans 3:23, 24 with you.) The Bible tells us that all of us have sinned. What is the only way we receive forgiveness for our sins?

Take a penny and use a red marker to color one side. Keep this penny with you to remind you that you Christ's blood paid for your sins. Because Jesus died on the cross, you can be forgiven. -Reprinted by Permission from Children's Ministry Magazine, 1994. Copyright by Group Publishing, P.O. Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539.

### *Sin Separates!*

PREPARATION: Cut a piece of adding machine tape 20 inches long. Form a circle and tape the ends together. Cut another piece of adding machine tape 20 inches long. Make a half twist and tape the ends together to form a circle. Using a stick-on file label, label a pair of scissors "Sin."

PRESENTATION: In the beginning, God enjoyed a wonderful friendship with Adam and Eve, the man and woman He had created. Each evening as the sun was going down and the air was cool, God walked with them through the Garden of Eden. He talked

with them, perhaps telling them how much He loved them and enjoyed their friendship. (Begin cutting down the middle of the first circle while you are talking about Adam and Eve's sin. The circle will be cut in two, illustrating that sin separates.)

But one day Satan came into the Garden. He appeared to Eve in the form of a very cunning snake. He enticed her to disobey God, to eat the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Then she gave Adam a bite. Immediately they realized they had sinned. They were ashamed and afraid.

That evening when God came into the Garden, He called to them. Adam and Eve did not come. Their sins kept them from coming to God, from enjoy friendship with Him. Sin had separated them from God.

God did not want to be separated from the people He had made. He loved them and wanted to enjoy fellowship with them. That very day, He promised that He would make a way to bring sinful men and women back to Him. He promised that He would send His Son Jesus. God kept His promise. (Begin cutting the second circle with the half twist. Cut 1/3 way in from the edge, continuing around the circle twice until you come to the starting place. The circle will become two circles; a big circle that represents Jesus and a small circle that represents those who are reconciled to Him.)

Hundreds of years after Adam and Eve sinned, God sent His Son Jesus to the earth. Jesus lived a sinless life here on earth. He always obeyed His Heavenly Father. He willingly gave His life on the cross for our sins. When we admit our sinfulness to Him and believe Him to forgive our sins, we are no longer separated from God. He is our Father and once again we can enjoy a wonderful friendship with Him.