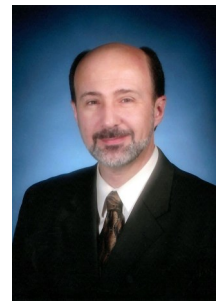




The Partnership

July 2014

Working with the local church and the Christian community
to share the Gospel with children throughout the Empire State



Jeff Michaels

Child Evangelism Fellowship of the Empire State Inc. Finger Lakes & Wayne County Area Chapter

Teaching Children Deeper Truth

One of my great concerns as a Christian leader and as a minister of the Gospel is the extraordinarily large number of young adults who depart from the faith during high school and college years. In his timely book, *You Lost Me*, author David Kinnammon describes the problem:

“Millions of young adults leave active involvement in church as they exit their teen years. Some never return, while others live indefinitely at the margins of the faith community, attempting to define their own spirituality” (19).

This problem provides a challenge to those of us who conduct ministry to children and for me, it has contributed to personal growth and a change in my style of teaching. I fully believe that children in our club and church ministries must be taught in such a way that deep discipleship takes place. Indeed they can receive these deeper truths, absorb them and learn to walk closely with the Lord today and throughout their lives!

Of course, teaching foundational truth is imperative. Kids with limited exposure to God’s Word or those who have had very little church attendance must learn the essential elements of who God is, the truth of His love, the uniqueness of the Bible, the Gospel message, the first steps of growth and more. These truths should be carefully taught over time, leading to richness and depth of personal spiritual experience and the ability to absorb deeper truth. And this approach helps lead children to a life-long relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Are you a teacher of children? How’s it going in your class? Do the kids have a good understanding of foundational truth? Are they “growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18)?

Let us never underestimate what children can learn and absorb through quality, high level teaching based upon God’s Word. After all, His Holy Spirit is our helper and He will do the work that only He can do... touching hearts and souls in ways that you and I can only begin to imagine!

Be sure to take a look at page 2 to read about and see some deeper truth being absorbed by some young disciples...

Ministry in Motion

I am a baseball fan - especially my beloved Chicago Cubs. Yes, I know! When I want to review game results, I check the box score first, as I prefer seeing the numbers as opposed to reading the account of the game written by a reporter. Through a box score I get the key facts at a glance.

The problem with a box score is that it really doesn’t tell the story of the game. There’s no accounting of the key plays that made a difference in the outcome, no strategic decisions, no emotion and no subtleties - those living moments that give life and action to the game.

And so it is with ministry such as after school Good News Clubs. I can give you a “box score” accounting of what has taken place during the school year and occasionally I actually do. Perhaps you like seeing the facts at a glance. Here they are:

- ◆ 10 Good News Clubs
- ◆ 247 children enrolled
- ◆ 12+ professions of faith
- ◆ 70+ volunteers
- ◆ 7 partner churches

But as with baseball, there is more - much more - to the story. Please continue to page 2 to see and read a little of the living moments where there is life and action!

All the best!

Jeff & Dee Michaels

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Children Learning Deeper and Foundational Truth from God's Word

Since our last letter, we have had wonderful opportunities to teach children some of the deeper truths mentioned on page 1, including a group of children we see each week on Wednesday evenings and another group we see just once a year.

The Wednesday night group has been a part of our ministry for four years and three of the girls have been with us the entire time. All of the kids come from solid Christian homes and are well-grounded in the faith, especially for their ages (6-11). This spring we began a ten week series of lessons on the 23rd Psalm, a series I wrote myself. As I explained to their parents in a letter given in advance, I had three goals for the children: First, that each child would commit the 23rd Psalm to memory - in perfect King James English. Second, that each one would have a good understanding of the psalm, both the historical context and the rich meaning behind each phrase. Third, that each child would draw closer to God as they learn and apply the truth of this wonderful passage.

The results? All six children who regularly attended the ten sessions were able to commit Psalm 23 to memory and I trust that for each one, it's in their long-term memory. As for the second and third goals, these are more difficult to observe and measure, but it's clear that they did learn the meaning and the applications. We also worked on a special craft to reinforce the teaching, which provided them with a visual reminder of the Lord Jesus as our Good Shepherd. This artwork can be placed on their bedroom wall if desired.

Another group of kids we enjoy spending time with is a combined set of children who attend West Groton Bible Church and Faith Bible Fellowship. This is the fifth year we have had a day in June at Camp Gregory in Aurora to teach them. This is a very well-taught and committed group of children, so we strive to be creative with fresh ideas since they know their Bible so very well!

This year we decided to teach three sessions on the Tabernacle, a challenging set of lessons because of the deep symbolic nature of God's design for His dwelling place. Fortunately we were able to put together a set of visual aids including a scale model of the Tabernacle and courtyard that helped the children visualize the concepts. Of course, one of the keys to understanding the teaching is to see the Lord Jesus depicted in the furniture and the placement of each element.

Meanwhile I had the opportunity to teach a six week after school club in Interlaken at the end of the school year. This was such a wonderful group of 25 children, but many of them have very little church background. The focus was of course foundational truth, taught in the context of a series called Do What's Right.

The club was outstanding and the Lord wonderfully blessed the efforts of our entire team. Music was a big part of each week and the children sang the songs, then listened carefully to the teaching and they learned our theme verse: Deuteronomy 6:18a... "Thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord."

It's been a great spring! And what I have related to you today doesn't even include the wonderful and successful efforts of our other volunteers who have been teaching after school Good News Clubs in multiple locations. Oh, the limits of 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper!

So to sum up the contents of this letter I simply wish to reiterate the importance of conducting children's ministry with long-term vision and the goal of building deep spiritual truth into young lives. The kind of truth that makes true disciples and that encourages today's children to eventually grow into great spiritual leaders as adults. God bless you as you aim for and work toward this noble cause!

A Note About Financial Support

It has been my long-time custom to only mention financial support one time each year - usually the month of November as we finish out the year. However, at this time our local CEF chapter is experiencing a very significant downturn in giving (-30% this year) which has caused a shortfall and depletion of reserves.

If you have not been able to give to this ministry lately, then this would be a very good time. Please give as you are able, but do only as the Lord leads. That's what we want too!

Should the Lord lead you to give, a response card is enclosed for your convenience - THANK YOU...



Partnership Response Card

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Dear Jeff ... Please send me more information:

I am interested in after school Good News Clubs

Please add me to the e-mail mailing list

I am interested in Good News Club at home

Please pray for me. My request is: _____

(your request will be kept confidential—use back if needed)

I wish to support the work of CEF in the Finger Lakes area.

\$_____ enclosed \$_____ monthly

Count on me to pray for the ministry of CEF

Please use this coupon and the enclosed envelope or mail to: CEF / PO Box 36 / Interlaken, NY 14847