

Spoons and Prayers

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I am often reminded that mission is FOR children but can also be BY children.

Recently, a mother wanted me to meet her young daughter. When considering what she wanted to be when she grew up, her daughter said she wanted to be a missionary and teach children.

I talked to little Hannah and asked her if she would like to start being a missionary now. I opened my bag and showed Hannah a collection of "prayer sticks" that I happened to have inside. Note: One never knows what a Bible teacher "happens to have in his or her bag"!

Years ago, someone gave me a big box of coffee stirrers (craft sticks or popsicle sticks.) I began using these sticks for prayer activities. Participants in training workshops write the names of the children they teach on these sticks. We collect the sticks and then pass them back out again so the children can be prayed for by name. [Read the full instructions for prayer sticks here.](#)

Amongst my bag of sticks were two plastic spoons. Instead of writing a child's name on a stick, a Bible teacher in Botswana had come up with the idea of drawing the face of each child on a plastic spoon. What a great idea! In Hannah, I knew I had found the perfect

person to pray for these children.

Hannah took the spoons and took the task seriously. A few days later, her mother sent this message to me:

Hi Mary! I wanted to share with you that we have been praying for the sweet girls whose names are on the spoons you gave Hannah! 1 spoon had another name on the back so there are 3 names. Last night, Hannah prayed for Emma, Ret and Martha and then added... "And all the kids whose names are in all those bags, Lord, you know em." I just wanted to share with you and thank you for giving her an insight to mission work!!

Thank you, Hannah. You remind me that children are part of the Mission of God. We do not have to wait until we are "old enough" to love God and bless others. Neither are we ever "too old". This little girl approached the throne of God and confidently asked the King of the Universe to bring blessing into the lives of children on the other side of the world.

How do you think God responded?



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Yes, This Counts at Home



PRAYER CARDS:

Reminding us to pray for our brothers and sisters



The troubling story of Joseph and his brothers leads to good discussion about getting along with siblings.

Genesis 35:23-26; 37:1-36

another teaching idea from www.missionbibleclass.org

The best lessons are not what goes on in my Bible class. The best lessons are what the children take with them when they leave.

Years ago I was teaching children about the [Fruit of the Spirit](#). One young child was in total agreement with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and faithfulness. These were great concepts and he loved learning about them and exploring how they apply in church and in school and with his friends. But I'll never forget his reaction when I mentioned that the Fruit of the Spirit should also be displayed to our brothers and sisters in our family.

This young man, moments before, had been enthusiastic when talking about these concepts in various other settings. Now, he looked at me in shock and horror and said, "What! This counts at HOME too?"

This child realised a truth that is for all of us. It is God's intention that we apply what we learn to ALL parts of our lives.

[Prayer Cards](#) are one way to help children understand this important truth.

I was able to use these recently when teaching about [Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery](#). As we explored the tense relationship between Joseph and his brothers I asked the children in my class to consider relationships with their own siblings. Even if we do not always get along we should want the best for them. One way to do this is to pray for them.

I supplied paper, scissors and pens. As we talked about our siblings we wrote their names on cards. In class we prayed for each one. Then, the children took the cards home so they could remember to pray for their siblings.

Yes, prayer counts at home, too.

[Full instructions for prayer cards](#)

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Teaching Children to Pray

One of the most profound aspects of helping shape the spiritual lives of children is guiding them in talking to God.

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R-E-S-P-E-C-T



During a planning meeting for a holiday program I challenged the group to define the word “respect”. At first it seemed like it would be a simple thing to do. We seemed to have no problem coming up with scenarios where respect was shown but we found it hard to actually put a meaning into words. Here's what we came up with:

Respect is feeling that something or someone is valuable and worthy of honour while at the same time showing this feeling by actions.

Both feeling and acting are required for respect. Actions without feeling are not respect. The statement “I respect you” is not respect when it is not lived out.

- Respect God. God is worthy of our words and actions.
- Respect others. God created other people so we respect God by respecting others.
- Respect yourself as one who has been created and loved by God.

While studying the bible character, Daniel, we explored the idea of respect. In the story of the Writing on the Wall in [Daniel chapter 5](#) King Belshazzar hosted a drunken party. Instead of normal dishes he served food and wine in the special temple dishes used in worship to God. His disrespect for God ended badly for the king.

During the party a mysterious hand appeared and wrote “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin”. The king was afraid and eventually Daniel was called in to interpret the words. Daniel told Belshazzar that the king was arrogant and had insulted God. The words meant that Belshazzar's time was finished. He died that very night.

Here are some of the ideas we used for teaching this lesson:

Attributes of God Boxes:



1. Talk about some of the attributes of God with the children. Each child should choose 2-4 attributes they feel are important to them and write (or draw) them on small white cards. (Below is a list of attributes I found at <http://www.josh.org/video-2/attributes-of-god/>)
 1. Because God is a personal Spirit...I will seek intimate fellowship with Him.
 2. Because God is all-powerful...He can help me with anything.
 3. Because God is ever-present...He is always with me.
 4. Because God knows everything...I will go to Him with all my questions and concerns.
 5. Because God is sovereign...I will joyfully submit to His will.
 6. Because God is holy...I will devote myself to Him in purity, worship, and service.
 7. Because God is absolute truth...I will believe what He says and live accordingly.
 8. Because God is righteous...I will live by His standards.
 9. Because God is just...He will always treat me fairly.
 10. Because God is love...He is unconditionally committed to my well-being.
 11. Because God is merciful...He forgives me of my sins when I sincerely confess them.
 12. Because God is faithful...I will trust Him to always keep His promises.
 13. Because God never changes...My future is secure and eternal.
2. Decorate small boxes and place the cards inside. We used Chinese Take-out boxes but you could use any kind of box or bag.
3. Guided Conversation: As the children are decorating the boxes the teacher can continue conversation about the various attributes of God and how these attributes lead to our respect for him.

Group Wall:



We assigned different letters to children and had them put them together to form the words "MENE MENE TEKEL PARSIN". No one knew beforehand what the letters were going to spell so the children had to put them together like a puzzle.

Application and Prayer Time:

- Continue the earlier discussion and talk about how we should try to reflect the attributes of God in our personal lives. Guide children in writing their name down the left side of the paper. Beside each letter they should write something about God that starts with that letter (example below).
- M- Merciful
A- Artistic in His beautiful creation
R- Righteous
Y- Yes is yes and No is No (truthful)
Encourage the children to circle one attribute that they would like to be better at. Teacher should pray for the children one by one for the item circled.

Group Memory Verse:

Show proper respect to everyone.

Love the community of believers.

Have respect for God.

Honor the king.

1 Peter 2:17 (NIRV)

The children will learn this verse together through repetition. The challenge is to say the verse again and again even though an increasing number of words are covered up.

“Show proper respect to everyone. Love the community of believers. Have respect for God. Honor the king.” 1 Peter 2:17 New International Reader’s Version (NIRV)

- Print the verse on a paper before class.
- Provide the children with scraps of paper and glue.
- Place the printed verse on the table top and guide children in reading the verse together with you.
- Child glues one of the small bits of paper over a word and then everyone says verse again.
- The paper then passes to the next person so they cover another word. Everyone recites the verse again.
- One at a time cover word(s) and repeat until all words are covered and verse is memorised.

More resources for this story can be found at [Writing on the Wall](#).

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Captives in Babylon



I just finished participating in a 3 day holiday programme where we had 3 different lessons from the book of Daniel.

In the first day we studied Daniel chapter 1 and talked about how Daniel and his friends were taken into captivity by the Babylonians.

Then we covered the story of [Daniel and the King's Food](#) and talked about how Daniel and his friends respected God and respected themselves enough to eat the healthy food God allowed instead of what the Babylonian King offered from his table.

Here are some of the activities we did...

Prayer Chains:

During the prayer time we talked about how God was with Daniel and his friends even when they were chained and forced to leave their homes and families. God heard Daniel's prayers and he hears us when we pray. We wrote prayer requests on slips of paper and put them together into chains. Then we took turns choosing links of the chain and praying the requests. In the end everyone joined their chains together to make one very long chain.



Healthy Food Place-mats:

Daniel and his friends refused to eat the food that King Nebuchadnezzar offered because it was food that God did not allow his people to eat. Instead they chose the healthy food that was approved by God. We pre-cut place-mats from burlap (hessian) fabric and then provided fabric glue and fabric pictures of healthy food so the children could decorate the place-mats.



Taste-Testing Food:

The children loved this one! We placed small amounts of food in cups and then blind-folded one child at a time so they could taste the food and guess what it was. Each child tasted one food item. The other children got to watch the facial expressions of the one testing the food.

Our aim was a variety of tastes including sour, sweet, bitter and salty. So we chose lemon juice, chocolate sauce, vinegar, ketchup, soy sauce, honey and fish sauce.



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