



## ***Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide***

### **Devotional**

## **BURIED TREASURE**

Throughout the last five years, and 59 issues of Mini Mag, we have kept emphasising how necessary it is for us as believers to know what God is like, and on the basis of that knowledge, to know God personally. These are the basic truths of the Christian life, and as we grow in our understanding and experience of them, the more we will be like those "people, who know their God, and shall be strong and carry out great exploits." (Daniel 11:32b) We also kept emphasising that the primary source of that knowledge is in the Word of God. As a result, every time we read and study God's Word, we should ask ourselves the question "What does this passage teach me about God?" The answer to that question is real and wonderful treasure. This treasure is there for us in His Word, but it can be hidden or buried, and God wants us to dig for it and find it and rejoice in it.

To-day we will, as an example, have a treasure hunt. We will approach Isaiah chapter 40 with our spiritual spades and search for the treasure about God, which is buried there, especially because He commands us in verse 9 to "Behold your God."

► Look! I find gold in verses 12, 22, 26, 28, showing us the truth that GOD IS THE CREATOR. (verse 28)

**Why should I be weak? His creation is evidence of His power which is available for me. (verse 29)**

► Look! There is silver in verses 10, 15, 23 telling us that GOD IS IN CONTROL of the earth and all in it.

**Why should I worry? Can I not leave everything and every circumstance in His Hands.**

► Look! There are some rubies and emeralds in verses 13, 14. They show us that GOD IS WISE and that He knows everything. I don't. He knows what is best for me, and I can trust Him to guide me.

**Why should I be confused when God is ready and able to lead me?**

► Look! There is a special diamond right in the middle of the chapter and nestling among all those great truths of God's creation, God's control and God's wisdom. This great and wonderful truth is that GOD CARES for us. "He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young." (40:11)

**Why should I have any fears about the future when I have a God and Shepherd like that?**

What a treasure trove that chapter is. We have learned so much about our wonderful God. But just before we end our digging, God gives us, in the last verses, three specific applications of what we have learned about Him.



We welcome you to Mini Mag 60 with the challenging words of Charles Spurgeon, the renowned pastor and preacher of 19<sup>th</sup> century England.

"The conversion of children is not expected in many of our churches and congregations. I mean that they do not expect the children to be converted as children. The theory is that if we can impress youthful minds with principles which may in after years prove useful for them, we have done a great deal. But to convert children as children, and to regard them as being as much believers as their seniors, is regarded as absurd. To this supposed absurdity I cling with all my heart." This would also surely be true of many of our churches today. But we are thankful for those churches who believe in, and are involved in, the evangelism of children and who pray for their conversion.

- God gives POWER to the weak. (verse 29a)
  - God increases STRENGTH to the weary. (verses 29b 30)
  - God blesses those WHO WAIT ON HIM. (verse 31a)
- Then, in verse 31b we read that God gives us strength to FLY. (to rise above problems) He gives us strength to RUN. (to keep going despite problems). He gives us strength to WALK (to be patient and trust Him for the solution of the problems.)

**"Thank you, Heavenly Father, for all these truths we have learned about You. Help us to apply them."**

We continue our revision of key subjects in earlier Mini Mags with a study of the passage in Mark 10:13-16. (along with Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17) This is probably the passage which most people associate with children, and it shows us how much the Lord Jesus loved and valued children.

**We see firstly** (Verse 13a) a group of people (probably mothers or parents) who brought the children to the Lord Jesus for Him to bless them. They carried those who were infants (Brephos Luke 18:15) and they led those who were little children. (Paidion) We admire the love and desire they had for their children to be blessed by the Lord Jesus. **We, as believers to-day, should have a love for children, a desire to see them trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and a willingness to do what we can to lead them to Him.**

**We see, secondly**, that the children came, some carried by their parents, others led by them. There was no display of resistance or desire to avoid the wishes of their parents. They were glad to come. **We find a similar reaction from children to-day when we seek to lead them to the Lord Jesus in our ministry to them. They are so open to our teaching and so eager to respond and come to Him.**

**We see thirdly**, (verse 31b) with dismay, how, for some reason, the disciples reacted critically to what these dear people were doing. I could see the Pharisees doing it, but surely not the disciples. Perhaps they thought that the children were unimportant and that they had no need for,

or ability to receive, such blessing. **We need to realise that there are many Christians to-day who think children are spiritually unimportant and that they have no need for, or ability to receive, salvation. How sad!**

**We see, lastly**, (verses 14-16) the reaction of the Lord Jesus to what His disciples had said and done. We read that He was MUCH DISPLEASED with them. He told them that they should not stop the children from coming to Him, and that they should let, or allow, them to come. And He put His hands on the children and blessed them. **What a wonderful encouragement His action is for those of us who evangelise children, and what a rebuke to those who would deny them this possibility.**

These verses do not teach us, as some say, that all children are "in the kingdom of God". The words "of such" in verse 14 mean "those who are similar to." Those who enter the kingdom of God must be similar to little children. They must be humble and trustful. The following verse 15 confirms that this is correct. Children are not born into the kingdom of God. If they trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, they will of course enter the Kingdom of God, and it is simpler for them to do so because they are already by nature, humble and trustful. The Lord Jesus also makes this fact clear to His disciples in Matthew 18:3 when He tells them that the person who wants to enter the kingdom of Heaven must, first of all, become like a little child.



### KEY QUESTIONS ASKED

### BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

**Question:** I am confused. Should I tell my children a Bible story or should I teach them a Bible lesson?

**Answer:** A short simple answer is that you should do both.

**A BIBLE STORY** is purely and simply a narrative, and a sequence of connected and related events told in an interesting way.

The Bible is made up, to a large extent, of stories. Much of the ministry of the Lord Jesus consisted of stories or parables. (but He used them to teach truth) So, your teaching ministry to children should be based upon the telling of stories from the Word of God. In addition, there is no better way to gain and hold the attention of children. Some teachers, however, think that a well-told Bible story with a truth or an application at the end is all that is needed. They rely too much on the story and overlook the fact that the story should only provide the basis for a lesson in which a truth is taught and applied.

**A BIBLE LESSON** is based on, and includes in it, the telling of a Bible story. but uses the story to teach and apply the central truth which is contained in the passage on which the story is based. A Bible lesson, therefore, aims at teaching a Bible truth. Its purpose is that the children will understand this truth and that it will help them come to Christ for salvation or grow spiritually. Some teachers, however, are so anxious to teach the truth, which is there, that they rely too little on the story and don't see that it is

needed to illustrate the truth. The proper telling of the story makes it easier for the truth to be understood and applied.

**You can see, in answer to your question, that it is best to tell a Bible story AND to use it to teach a Bible truth so that it becomes a Bible lesson. It starts as a story and develops into a Bible lesson.**

I have found that there are four ways teachers link (or don't link) a Bible story with a Bible lesson.

- 1) Some teachers tell Bible stories but with no truth taught in them. Just a story.
- 2) Some teachers tell Bible stories and then add on a truth and/or application at the end.
- 3) Some teachers tell Bible stories, but try to teach so many truths through them, so that none of them are really understood.
- 4) Some teachers tell Bible stories and use each story to teach and apply one central truth which they weave throughout the story.

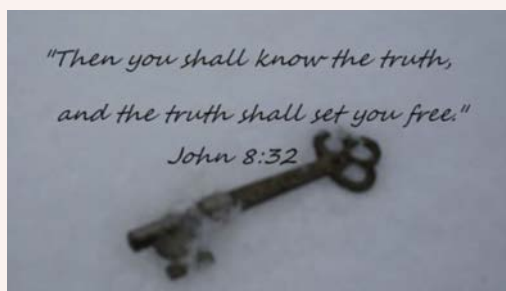
**Which of these methods have you been using? Which of these methods do you think is the best? During my many years of a teaching ministry to children, I have tried or used all four of these ways to teach a Bible lesson to children, and I have no doubt whatsoever that the fourth possibility is, by far, the best and most effective. It is therefore the method which has been taught and explained right through this series of Mini Mag.**

## TEACH THEM TRUTHS

In issues 57,58,59 and 60 I am looking back over all the subjects which have been taught in issues 1-56, and I am selecting the subjects which are most important and need continual repetition. In this issue we look again at perhaps the subject which needs more repetition than any other.

The first, and the main, responsibility for every teacher of children is to TEACH THEM DOCTRINE. That means that in every lesson we should teach them A TRUTH. Through our Bible lessons, we should teach them TRUTHS about God, or about Jesus Christ or about the Holy Spirit, or about themselves, or about sin, or about salvation, or about the future or about the Bible. We should also apply that truth which we have taught in our lesson to both groups of children. The Principal of one of Europe's largest Bible Schools writes: "Children are often served a simple fare of stories. They know about David and Goliath, Daniel in the lion's den, and Jesus Christ feeding the 5000. But they are not being taught doctrine. They are not being taught the great Bible truths about God and themselves." Our responsibility is not just to tell Bible stories but to teach and weave into those stories the central truth which we have found in the Bible passage and apply that truth to both groups of children and their needs. This is more difficult and requires much more preparation, but the Lord Jesus Himself tells us that it is "the truth which makes them free." (John 8:32)

Unsaved children need to understand doctrine because the gospel message consists of doctrine. Saved children need to understand doctrine because that is what enables them to grow spiritually.



There are three ways you can teach doctrine to children in your Bible lesson.

1) You can teach the doctrine which is the central truth of each Bible lesson you are teaching in chronological order. The passages will be in a systematic order, but the truths will not be in a systematic order. I presume that you are using the central truth system of teaching your lesson, where you find the central truth of the passage on which your lesson is based, and you teach and weave that truth throughout your story. You also apply that truth in two ways -to saved and unsaved children.

2) You can also teach a doctrine as the central truth of each Bible lesson you are teaching but do so in a series of specially chosen passages and lessons from the Word of God. Choose the doctrine you want to teach first and then choose a passage which enables you to teach that truth. This method enables you to teach your doctrines in a chosen systematic order, which can be very effective. The passages and lessons are not in a systematic order, but the truths are.

3) You can teach each doctrine using 7 or 8 flashcards, each one with words and pictures from the Bible and, together, teach and apply one doctrine step by step in a systematic progression. This method can be very helpful and effective in any teaching situation.

In the next issue of Mini Mag, we will look at, and study in more detail, what I have written above. I plan especially to find and outline Bible lesson plans which will help you to teach the children Bible doctrines effectively and systematically.

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3) Did you ever hear the story of the two caterpillars which were crawling over the grass, when a butterfly flew over them. They looked up and one nudged the other and said, "You could not get me up in one of those things for a million pounds." He did not understand his future destiny. One day he would be "up there in one of those things" and love it. Indeed, he would be one of those things.

Do you boys and girls who are Christians understand what you will be one day? You will have a new body, without sin or sickness and you will live forever in Heaven.



Many of the publications written by Dr Sam Doherty are now available to download from our partnership organisation Revival Movement Association. There you will find training manuals and other books to help you in your life and ministry.

Log on to

[www.revivalmovement.org/teaching-children](http://www.revivalmovement.org/teaching-children)





## ILLUSTRATIONS FOR CHILDREN

1) I want to tell you about three boys who went to Good News Club and what happened to them. They listened carefully to the teacher as he told a Bible story about Adam and Eve and explained that because of their sin, they, and everybody else, were sinners and needed forgiveness. But he also told them that if they trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, He would forgive their sins.

The first boy was angry at what he had heard about being a sinner, and he went home really MAD.

The second boy was SAD at what he had heard. He knew he had done wrong things, but he had done nothing about it. He went home SAD. (It's good to be SAD if this leads you to ask the Lord Jesus to forgive you and change you.)

The third boy was MAD when he first listened to the teacher speak about his sin, but as he thought about it, he became SAD. He knew he was a sinner. And just sitting there in the Good News Club he asked the Lord Jesus to forgive him and change him, and he went

home feeling so GLAD that he had done so, that he was now forgiven and had eternal life.

Which of these boys are you? Do you feel MAD at what you have heard? Do you feel SAD when you look at yourself and see the wrong things you have done? Do you feel GLAD because you have trusted the Lord Jesus and ALL your sins are forgiven, and you will live forever in Heaven?

2) When I grow up" said a boy who was not a Christian "I am going to go to university and study to become a doctor." "What will you do then?" asked his sister who was a Christian. "I will get my degree and become a doctor." "Then what?" she asked. "Oh, then I will get married and settle down in a lovely home." "Then what?" she continued. "I shall enjoy married life." he replied. "Then what?" his sister enquired. "I shall have children." "Then what?" continued his sister. "The children will grow up and I will have lovely grandchildren." "Then what?" she said. "Then I will probably grow old and die." "Then what?" whispered his sister sadly. "Oh, shut up." said the boy angrily and went away. But he could not get his sister's last question out of his mind, and he realised that he did not want to live (and die) without the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. So, that very evening, at the side of his bed, he turned from his sin and put his trust in Him.

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## 75 Years and Still Learning:

*The author's experience and the lesson he learned*

I was thankful to God that during 29 years of travelling all over Europe in my ministry, in various types of transport, I was only robbed three times. The first time was in Poland. A pastor and I were travelling by train to a conference. I wore a long winter coat, and my wallet was stored safely in the hip pocket of my trousers. The platform was crowded and there was much jostling getting onto the train. There were no seats available, so we stood in the corridor. Suddenly the pastor said to me "Sam, my wallet is gone!!" I sympathised with him. Then I felt in my hip pocket and mine was gone too. I don't know how they did it. We could do nothing about it.

Years later, I had a similar experience when boarding a crowded tram outside the main railway station in Warsaw Poland. I was thankful I had only a little money in my wallet.

Then, on another occasion I was travelling overnight by train to teach in a Bible school in Northern Germany. I found a seat in an empty compartment of my train, and I settled down in it. I was tired and I fell asleep. When I

## THANK YOU LORD

awoke, early in the morning, my wallet was gone. I was thankful that my "visitor" had not harmed me in anyway. Experiences like these are not very pleasant but they reminded me, and still remind me, of the story of Matthew Henry the famous English theologian of the 17th /18th centuries, who was once attacked by thieves and robbed of his purse on his way to speak at a meeting. When he arrived at the church, he told his listeners with much joy and thankfulness what had happened and explained why he was so thankful. Later in his diary he recorded what he had told them "Let me be thankful. First, I am thankful that I was never robbed before. Second, I am thankful that although they took my purse, they did not take my life. Third I am thankful that what they stole did not amount to very much. Last, I am thankful that I was the one robbed and not the robber."

And I have tried to learn "in EVERYTHING to give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and to find something in every situation for which I can praise God and be thankful.

The Mini-Mag is published and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, and Kenneth Martin.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's 75 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at TFACEW@aol.com.

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