

# Children's Church Parent's Guide

## For January 16, 2004

### Overview of this Week's Message

**Theme:** The Principle of Stewardship

**Key Passage:** 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

**Bible Memory Verse for the Week:** 1 Corinthians 3:14

#### Background:

Paul was dealing with the issue of a group of the Corinthians saying they were followers of Paul while others were proclaiming themselves to be followers of Apollos. This was leading to fights and jealousy within the church. Paul's point to the Corinthians was both he and Apollos were mere men; they were co-workers with God and no more. Therefore the Corinthians were wrong to say anything other than, "I follow Jesus."

Our passage starts with Paul discussing how he built a foundation on the one Jesus had already laid with respect to the believers in Corinth. Someone (such as Apollos, though Paul doesn't specifically mention anyone) was building on Paul's foundation. This goes back to 3:6 where Paul uses the analogy of planting the seed, Apollos watering it, but God making it grow. Paul then goes on to describe how we can build in our own lives. Here are the scenarios Paul presents:

1. A person can attempt to build a foundation other than Jesus and His salvation. However, there is only one foundation and that is the one Jesus laid. Any other attempt is doomed to complete and utter failure. (v. 11)
2. A person can accept Jesus and receive as a foundation His salvation. The person then has a choice on how to live the rest of his or her life. Ultimately, how a person lives will be tested. (v.12-13)
  - a. A person can live his or her life in accordance with Scripture. This is building with gold, silver, and precious gems. When judgment comes and the works of a person and how he or she built their lives is put to the fire, the gold, silver, and jewels will survive and the person will receive a just reward. (v. 14)
  - b. A person can choose to live his or her life mostly out of sync with God. The life this person builds is one built as if it were made of wood, hay, or straw. When subjected to the fire of judgment, all of this work will be burnt up and nothing will be left except for the foundation of Jesus' salvation. While the person will experience salvation, that person will have nothing else to show for their time and walk with Christ. (v. 15)

### Monday: Reinforcement

**Theme:** Put effort into what lasts

**Key Passage:** 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Open by talking about who Jesus is, reminding your child of His love for each one of us. Talk about how we can choose to follow Jesus. In Children's Church we call this making Jesus the boss of our lives as that's easier for a child to understand than "Lord and Savior." Explain that

each person has a choice on whether or not to have Jesus as the boss. Also, say that each person has special gifts God has provided. These gifts God intends for us to use to serve Him. Talk about how for those who choose to accept Jesus, some do a good job using their gifts and others do not. Then tell the story of the *Three Little Pigs*.

There was an old mother pig with three little pigs, and it was time to send them off into the world. The first met a man with a bundle of straw and said to him, "Please, sir, give me that straw to build me a house." The man did, and the little pig built a house with it.

Then came a wolf who knocked at the door, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me in."

To which the pig answered, "No, no, not by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

The wolf then shouted, "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of sticks and said, "Please, sir, give me those sticks to build a house." The man did, and the pig built his house.

Along came the same wolf, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, not by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and he blew the house down, and he ate up the little pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said, "Please, sir, give me those bricks to build a house." So the man gave him the bricks, and the pig built a brick house.

The wolf came, as he did with the others, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, not by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could not blow the house down. Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he would eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happily ever afterwards.

Ask your child what was the difference between the first two pigs and the last pig. Explain to your child that we can put our efforts into things that last, things honoring God, or we can use our talents on things that don't. We should strive to be like the pig with the house made of bricks. We should put our talents towards serving God and build things that last.

Review the Bible memory verse with your child and help him or her repeat it several times.

## **Tuesday: The Real World**

**Theme:** God will put us in position to use our gifts.

**Key Passage:** Acts 8:26-38

Re-tell the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch to your child, but sanitize it so it is appropriate. For instance, refer to the Ethiopian as a government official instead of as a eunuch. After you tell the story, focus on how God used an angel to tell Philip exactly where to go. Point out God told Philip where to go, but He didn't say why. Once Philip got to where God wanted him to be only then did Philip find out the reason why. Philip was prepared to explain God's word to the Ethiopian and this is the reason He was selected by God to go.

Then talk about how many Christian organizations have churches, buildings, and people in Asia where the tsunami hit. Point out the fact God had placed these people in those places before the disaster struck. In the first few hours and days after the tsunami hit, these people were in place and began ministering to those in need. Each had gifts to be used for this emergency, but none of those people likely knew they would need to before the earthquake and tsunami.

Discuss with your child how God knows how we can best use our gifts. If we're willing to listen to Him, He will put us where we can make a difference. He did so with Philip as well as the missionaries and local Christians in the areas affected by the tsunami. It's up to us to listen to Him and let Him lead us.

Review the Bible verse with your child.

## **Wednesday: Missions Focus**

**Theme:** We should look for opportunities to use our gifts, even in non-traditional ways.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 25:31-46

Ask your child what he or she thinks a missionary is. Chances are your child will respond with something like, "A person who goes and lives in another country and teaches people about God." If your child answers in a similar manner, take the time to explain a missionary doesn't have to go to a foreign country to serve. We have missionaries within the United States, within the state, within the cities and towns we live in. A person doesn't have to leave the country to be a missionary.

Read verses 35 through 40 to your child. Ask what things the Lord says we can do (feed the hungry, take in the stranger, visit the prisoner, etc.) Ask your child if he or she thinks people who do these things could be considered missionaries. If your child says no, explain any time we share our faith or perform humanitarian work, we are being missionaries. Therefore, anyone is capable of being a missionary.

Talk to your child about the special gifts you see that he or she has (singing, boundless energy, friendliness, etc.) Talk about how those gifts might be used for missions, such as

singing at a nursing home or helping to clean up a park. These things should be general in nature as you'll get more into specifics on Thursday. If your child is interested, commit to exploring opportunities for missions in the community at large.

Review the Bible verse. Your child should be able to say it with no more than one or two prompts from you as your child recites the verse.

### **Thursday: Personal Application**

**Theme:** Age is not a restriction on serving God.

**Key Passage:** 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Re-tell the passage in your own words. Emphasize that the Bible indicates Samuel was a boy when God called him. Discuss how God can use us regardless of our age. Point out that just as Samuel was a boy, Moses was 80 before he went back to Egypt as God's servant. Ask your child if age really matters when it comes to serving God.

Review with your child the gifts you see he or she has. Ask your child if God can use those gifts today. Take about five minutes to brainstorm with your child about how they might use their gifts in the near future. Write each possibility down as it is said. Don't spend time concentrating on what was already put down. Rather, focus on coming up with as many feasible opportunities as possible. Make sure the opportunities match up well with their age and maturity. For instance, sending a four year-old into a prison is not a good idea most of the time.

After you complete the brainstorming, look at the list with your child. Cross off any opportunities that don't match up well your child and his or her gifts. Then spend some time looking at the rest and come up with a few ways for the child to use his or her gifts.

Review the Bible verse. Your child should be able to say it without prompting from an adult.

### **Friday: Family Time**

**Theme:** A family can use their gifts to serve God together.

**Key Passage:** Joshua 24:14-15

Talk about who Joshua was (the leader who took over for Moses). Discuss how hard it must have been on Joshua assuming the leadership after a guy like Moses. Explain that because Joshua followed God and attempted to use his gifts as God called him to, Joshua was able to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land and begin fulfilling God's promise to give all of the land to the Israelites.

Read the last part of verse 15 to your child beginning with, "As for me..." Explain that when Joshua said this he was an old man. Also discuss that this statement was true of Joshua his whole life, so far as the Bible reveals. Throughout Joshua's life we see a man devoted to God. Remind your child that because Joshua served God, God performed miracles like causing the walls of Jericho to come crashing down. These kinds of experience gave Joshua great confidence in stating where he and his family would stand.

Take 5 minutes again to brainstorm, but this time look at it from a family perspective. What can you do as a family that uses your gifts to serve others? Examples are things like participating in a highway cleanup project or feeding the homeless at a shelter. Once again, go back over the list and figure out a couple of things your family can attempt together in the near future.

Have your child recite the memory verse. Provide prompts if necessary. When your child finishes reciting the verse, take the time to celebrate your child's hard work this week.