

## **Step By Step Through The Bible With Children**

**"All thy children shall be taught of the LORD;  
and great shall be the peace of thy children."**

(Isaiah 54:13)

3rd REVISED EDITION

Copyright 1937

ALMA H. BAILEY

Printed in the U.S.A.

CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP 203 N. Wabash Avenue Chicago, Ill.

### **Chapter Two -**

#### **HOW TO OPEN A WEEK-DAY BIBLE CLASS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

If you are an inexperienced teacher, invite two or three children in to hear a Bible story. You will be surprised how gladly they will come and how eagerly they will listen.

Begin with just a few, and let the class grow naturally. The problem of discipline is a serious one with some teachers, but if one learns to keep order with a few, then order will no doubt be maintained as the class grows.

Do not allow children to talk without raising their hands for permission to speak, even though there are only a few. Have them come in, in an orderly manner, and sit down quietly. Children soon lose respect for a teacher who does not maintain order.

If you tell a good story your class will grow. If you do not tell a good story, put more time on preparation the following week. Think the story out carefully as you are walking along the street, or riding, or working about the house. See it perfectly in your mind, then it will not be hard to tell.

Examine yourself after each class to see wherein you have failed. If there was disorder and inattention, very likely it was the fault of the teacher. But that is no reason for the teacher's giving up in despair.

Make the children as comfortable as possible. Remember they have been sitting in school all day. Do not have the room too warm. Small children should not sit on chairs too high for them. Low benches, some 12 inches high and others 15 inches high, should be used. Several apple boxes laid on the flat sides with boards, or table boards, resting upon them, make good substitutes for benches.

One teacher had red benches made, which were most attractive, with the words, "JESUS said, '**Come unto me**'," painted on the top in black. Some teachers have been fortunate in finding

those interested in children's work who were glad to donate the lumber for benches and the labor, so the teacher had no expense.

Some classes have been ruined because the hostess has insisted on serving refreshments, and in every case this has proved unwise. Strange as it may seem, a well told Bible story will not only hold, but it will **keep right on holding** large numbers of children year after year, without any other attraction.

It is better to have a class of only five or six who come for the **Bread of Life**, than to have twenty or thirty who come for a sandwich or a piece of candy.

One hostess who served candy every week met a boy on the street who had not been at class for several weeks. She asked him why he had not been to Bible Class, and he said, "I don't like your kind of candy."

It is recommended that something special be done for the children several times a year as a surprise, if circumstances permit, but not so frequently that the children will come to expect it.

Along in March or April, when attendance is likely to fall off, the promise of a picnic or party at the close of the term, for those who attend regularly, will stimulate faithful attendance. Never make a promise to your class that you cannot reasonably fulfill.

If you are an experienced teacher and desire a larger class, you might prepare some invitations as follows. Use paper 5 x 3 inches in size. Fold it in the center, and on the front page write, "You are invited to a Neighborhood Bible Class." On the left inside page write, "Every Thursday after school at the home of (fill in your name and address)." At the right of the fold write, "Come, and bring a friend." At the top use such phrases as these: JESUS said, "**Learn of me**"; JESUS said, "**Come unto me**"; JESUS said, "**I am the light of the world**"; or short Scripture verses.

At a printing shop where miscellaneous printing is done, it may be possible to secure scraps of paper which have been discarded, to use for your invitations. Sometimes it is possible to get very pretty colors and shades which attract the children.

Go to the nearest school, either the afternoon of the day before your class, or at noon the day of your class. When the children are dismissed, hand out the invitations. **Do not go on the school grounds.**

You may reach only a few, as they scatter quickly in every direction. However, you should have thirty or forty invitations. If you do not give them all out, go another day.

If only two or three come, or even one, tell him or her the simple story of salvation and lead him or her to accept Christ. Never send a child away because others did not come.

Another way to enlarge your class is to trace off the outline of a fish about four inches long on bright orange-red paper, put a string through the nose of the fish and tie it together making a loop about two inches long, so it will slip over buttons or around children's fingers for safe keeping until they get home.

Then ask the children to go fishing for other children during the week, and if they bring someone with them the following week, reward them with a paper gold fish. Show them the fish as you talk about it. Always have a supply ready to give out.

The following week have those who brought a visitor stand, so all may see the workers. Then ask the visitors to stand with them, while the class sings, "*I will make you fishers of men.*" This is one of the best ways to enlarge a class. Even the older children work hard for a fish and enjoy standing while the chorus is sung.

Rewards seem always more or less unfair. Sometimes the smaller children say, "I asked three children to come but they wouldn't." They did the work and feel they should have a fish. It is hard to refuse them, but some word of encouragement about trying harder usually satisfies them.

"Experience is the best teacher" in starting a Bible Class. As in everything else, one learns by doing. Most teachers are surprised to find how easy it is to gather and hold the children.

If you become discouraged the first year, remember the second year will bring the harvest. You will then see encouraging results, the fruit of your labors. Often the children who are least regular the first year become the most regular the second year.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline depends to a large degree upon the teacher. She should arrive at least fifteen minutes before the children and have chairs and illustrations ready when they come. The smaller children usually arrive first. As soon as there are two or three present, begin on the memory verse for the day, as they need more help than the older ones. The others on finding the class started will take their seats quietly, thus much disorder will be avoided. Learn not to wait for any thing or any body; much can be accomplished in an hour if the time is not wasted.

Children should not be allowed to run about the house or to play. See that all toys are out of sight. The children should be seated in rows directly before the teacher's eyes rather than in a circle. Seat the smaller children on the front row and the taller ones in the back. When enough have arrived to sing, do so, after which have your memory work. Teach the children to give the reference before the Scripture verse, rather than at the close. (Helps on memory drills can be had at public libraries.) Then follow with prayer and lesson, always closing with an invitation to accept CHRIST, if new ones are present. If all have accepted CHRIST, remind them they are now the children of GOD and must learn to act and look like GOD's children. To do so, sin must be confessed, which means to tell GOD when they have disobeyed their parents, cheated in school, lied, spoken unkindly, or have been rude to others, especially to older persons. Then ask GOD to guide them in the right path and keep them from sin.

## **PRAYER**

Children should be taught to pray. For two or three weeks the teacher may repeat a line as follows: "Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Thee (not you) (have children repeat) for the gift of JESUS CHRIST, Thy Son (repeat), and for this Bible Class (repeat), where we learn about Thee

(repeat). Forgive our sins, and keep our hearts pure (repeat), that we may grow to be like JESUS. Amen" (repeat).

A little later ask the children for what things they would like to thank GOD. If they cannot think of anything, remind them that they should thank GOD for home, food, clothing, parents, friends, school, and every good thing. Again, ask if there is anyone who would like to thank GOD for any of those things. Tell them you will help them. If some say they wish to thank GOD for their father and mother, let them stand and close their eyes, and do so, or repeat after you: "Dear Heavenly Father, we (not I) thank Thee for our fathers and mothers. Amen."

In time help them to understand that the above mentioned gifts are material blessings, but that there are also spiritual blessings for which we should thank GOD. Explain somewhat as follows:

"*Spiritual* means the dear and precious things of GOD which we cannot see, but which are very real and lasting. All the things of this earth will pass away, but spiritual things never pass away. That seems very strange to us, does it not? The things we see are not lasting, they all grow old and pass away, but the things we cannot see are *everlasting*, they never grow old and they will never pass away."

When the children have learned to say "We thank Thee for our food" (this is earthly), show them there is something better and more precious than that and help them to add to that prayer, "but most of all we thank Thee for JESUS, the Bread of Life" (this is spiritual). "We thank Thee for our homes, but most of all for GOD, our heavenly home. Amen." "We thank Thee for our parents, but most of for GOD, our heavenly FATHER." "We thank Thee for our life but most of all for our heavenly life." Before long the children will be able to voice excellent prayers without your help.

After the prayer service the children should stand while they sing. This will rest them and prepare them for the lesson, which should follow.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR HYMNS**

Use those that seem never to grow old or lose their appeal, and that have a real message. Study the hymns and songs yourself and ask questions about them. If you are about to sing "JESUS Loves Me," ask "How do we know JESUS loves us?"

Answer-"The Bible tells us so."

Have two boys or two girls come forward and hold the open Bible. After you have sung the verse, ask "Who is weak?" The answer no doubt will be, "We are."

"Who is strong?"

"GOD."

As you sing "Heaven's gate to open wide" raise arms upward in front, parallel. When they are as high as the head, spread the arms out and bring them down to the side. Children love motions,

and they serve as an exercise to rest them.

In connection with

"Sing them over again to me,  
Wonderful words of Life,"

ask such questions as these:

"What kind of words are they?"

"Wonderful words."

"Yes, but they are something else also. Can anyone remember? We shall read the words together and see what kind of words they are. Who can tell us now? Yes, words of *life* and *beauty*. What do they teach us? Yes, they teach us *faith* and *duty*,"

It is well to print your hymns in good size letters, on large sheets of paper. Let the children read while singing, for a couple of weeks, then try to sing without having the words before them. Then use the printed song again occasionally so the new scholars may learn it also.

Other good hymns are: "Break Thou the Bread of Life" one verse may be sung just before the lesson. "What a Friend We Have in JESUS," "We Praise Thee, O GOD," and "Precious Jewels."

Children love "The Old-Time Religion," and each verse has a good thought to be impressed upon children's minds. Sing the first verse as follows:

"'Tis the old-time Gospel,  
'Tis the old-time Gospel,  
'Tis the old-time Gospel,  
And it's good enough for me."

Other good verses are: "It has shown me a Saviour"; "It will help me while living"; "Every day it grows better"; "It will do when I'm dying"; "It will take us all to Heaven!"

On this last verse, have children slowly raise both arms forward (wriggling their fingers), until the arms are above their heads, extended toward Heaven; then have them lower them, and repeat the motions three times.

Do not use too many choruses; choose a few very good ones and use them frequently. Children love familiar things. They like to hear stories, hymns, and verses over and over until they become as familiar as a nursery rhyme.

However, they grow weary of hearing the same thing over and over in the same tone of voice, presented in exactly the same way. Dress up the old familiar thoughts and verses with a new thought about them or with a question which will produce a fresh expression from the children.

## **SUMMARY**

**"Let all things be done decently and in order"** (I Corinthians 14:40).

Make your story interesting.

Talk as if you believed it.

Don't talk unless you do believe it.

Speak clearly and slowly enough so all will catch every word, but do not drag.

Change your tones: speak forcefully or softly, as the sense requires.

Use conversation, or dialogue between characters, where so given in the Bible.

Children should come in, sit down, and not be allowed to talk, or run about;

The teacher should be ready to begin on Memory Work.

Waste no time! The hour is precious.

Before the story, have a song service.

Follow this by prayer.

Make your story only as long as will hold the interest of the children.

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

The writer does not favor elaborate scenes as there seems to be grave danger of children becoming more absorbed in the picture, and the activity in mounting the picture, than there is in the spiritual truth being taught. A simple object to impress the heart of the lesson is all that is necessary, we believe.

It is true we all love illustrated books, but in reading such, we read, then stop to study the illustration and look for that about which we have read, making two different acts.

But where there is much activity, such as is necessary in mounting a story in detail, we firmly believe the eyes are more active than the ears, therefore, the scene is the all absorbing thing, rather than the spiritual truth which should be taught.

Some will not agree with these views, but the Bible has been taught for centuries without elaborate pictures with blessed results, because the HOLY SPIRIT has been given to take the things of CHRIST and show them unto us.

GOD used a lamb, a simple illustration, to teach the Gospel story to Adam and Eve, and we find that simple method all through the Bible.

Every teacher should have a scenic board about 24x36, or 30x40 inches, or even larger. A very light and inexpensive one maybe made from a large carton box, Plaster board or ply-wood is better for hard and continual use. Cover the board with black outing flannel, not gray.

Upon this board place simple cutouts, or objects which you have designed or traced from pictures. No teacher should feel discouraged because of not having material to illustrate every story. It has taken other teachers months and years to gather suitable material.

To make an object adhere to the board paste a small piece of outing flannel on the back of the

object. Keep on hand a very flexible light weight tag board (carried by paper stores and printers), on which to trace your objects, as this will be more durable and easier to handle than very thin paper. A package of colored construction paper such as dime stores carry should be on hand also.

## **PURPOSE OF THE COURSE**

These lessons are designed to give young children a knowledge of the Bible as a whole, and to lay a foundation for the intelligent reading of the Bible as they grow older.

Some one has said, "We cannot understand or interpret a single verse of the Bible, unless we understand the chapter in which the verse is found; we cannot understand the chapter unless we have some knowledge of the book in which the chapter is found, and we cannot understand the individual books of the Bible unless we know something of the Bible as a whole." - this is what we call the context of a verse.

If this statement is true, and we believe that it is, then the method with which to begin the instruction whether of little children, young people, or adults, and even Sunday School teachers, would seem to be the bird's-eye view method, or a view of the Bible as a whole.

Pictures serve as the framework or backbone upon which all Bible lessons and fundamental truths are hung. They provide an effective weekly review, so the lessons are knit together and all become one rather than many isolated lessons, thus giving the children a knowledge of the Bible such as too few adults ever get. Many teachers have testified that the use of pictures has made the Bible a new book to them.

In the Bible we have an inexhaustible supply of vivid pictures and stories, all true, and each one possessing beauty and interest, which set before the children the principles of right and wrong. Clear and definite teaching concerning sin and its effects, and a knowledge of the matchless grace of GOD will influence the hearts of little children throughout their lives.

Contrast is one of the most effective means by which truth is impressed upon the mind: In Deuteronomy 11:26 Moses used this method. At the close of a long discourse of warnings and exhortations spoken to GOD's people, Israel, Moses said, "**Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD, your GOD . . . and a curse** (punishment), **if ye will not obey . . . the LORD your GOD.**" We find this use of contrast is clearly defined in all of the great lessons in the Bible. Each lesson should be so presented to the children that they may be able to discern for themselves the right and the wrong.

The central theme of the Bible is CHRIST, His death and His resurrection, the gospel story. The Gospel should be the first and foremost aim in all of our lessons. Many children have never heard it, therefore, no better theme with which to begin our classes can we find than the story and record of the crucifixion and the need of the new birth.

"A little child of seven  
Or even three or four,  
May enter into Heaven  
Through CHRIST, the open Door;

For when the heart believeth  
On CHRIST, the Son of GOD,  
'Tis then the soul receiveth  
Salvation through His blood."

- Anonymous

~ end of chapter 2 ~

\*\*\*