

PART ONE

Children First



CHILDREN MATTER TO JESUS

The first century world saw the birth of a baby as the continuation of a family line and the growth of the nation. No wonder Jesus' attitude towards children shocked the religious leaders of his day and shook to the core even the view of his own disciples.

The worth Jesus placed on a child is seen in the way the gospel writers portrayed him building relationships with children.

8 gospel glimpses of Jesus & children

Jesus' statements about children.

- Let the children come. Mark 10:14.
- Jesus blessed them. Mark 10:16.
- Welcome children, welcome Jesus. Mark 10:16.
- Death to the one who causes a child to stumble. Matthew 18: 5, 6.
- You need to have the faith of a child. Matthew 18:3, 4.

Jesus involved children in His teaching.

- Become humble like this child. You must have their simple faith to experience salvation. Matthew 18:3, 4.
- Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many? John 6:9.

Jesus cared for children's physical needs.

- My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her that she may be healed and live. So Jesus went with him. Mark 5:21.
- The Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter. Mark 7:21.
- The demoniac boy. Mark 9:14.
- The official's son. John 4:46.

Jesus encouraged children to worship.

- When the chief priests and teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the Temple area, 'Hosanna to the Son of David', they were indignant. 'Do you hear what these children are saying?' they asked Him. 'Yes,' replied Jesus. 'Have you never read "from the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise"?' Matthew 21:15, 16.

Jesus observed children at play.

- In a parable Jesus described children playing in the market place. Matthew 11:16-19, Luke 7:31-35.

Jesus reflected on and developed the Old Testament's perspective of children.

- Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:4-7 the words of a morning and evening prayer known as the shema.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Jesus tells the church leader to first shepherd the children.

- "Simon do you love me?" "Yes lord you know that I love you." Jesus said to him "Feed my Lambs" before he said "Feed my sheep". John 21:15-17. See to the young ones first. Yes, Jesus did really say "children first".

Jesus shows anger.

- When the disciples rebuked those who brought their children to be blessed by Jesus, they did so because to them the children were unimportant. The response of Jesus to his disciples' action was of anger because they thought adult issues were more vital than ministering to children and were not letting the children have equal access to him. (Mark 10:13, 14)

The New International Version puts Mark 10:14 this way, "he was indignant". Whichever version is used, the meaning is as clear to church leaders today as it was in Jesus' time, we must minister to children first.¹

Missing the mark

The twenty-first century child matters to Jesus too. In each human embryo he has designed genes that help each baby to be born with an ability and yearning for spirituality. "Unless you are converted and become as little children you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3.

Research shows that by the age of two all facets of moral and spiritual development have begun and by the age of nine an individual's outlook on life is determined. The study by George Barna gives these startling results. Out of every 100 people asked at what age they accepted Christ as their Saviour, for a majority it was before the age of 12.

5 – 12	75%
13 – 18	10%
19 – death	15% ²

The implications of ignoring the importance of ministering to children are evident. The English Church Attendance Survey and earlier English Church Consensus have shown that the total number of children under 15 years of age attending church (of all denominations) on Sunday was:

1400,000 in 1979
1200,000 in 1989
720,000 in 1998

If this trend continues by 2016 the number could be as low as 225,500. Unfortunately this decline is reflected in Sabbath keeping churches too. In a study by Barry Gane and Steve Case, 35% - 63% no longer attend church. In the North American Division of 100,000 Roger Dudley has found that 50% of those on church books are inactive members.³

The implications of these findings are significant because they reinforce Jesus' understanding that it is in the early years that the church should value its children. Unfortunately, all denominations that prioritise evangelising teens and adults are now missing the mark. They should be aiming their ministry of salvation at the young ones.

Responding to Jesus' challenge

From Jesus' perspective, a little child is a reminder of our need of God and our dependence on him. Perhaps this is why children mattered so much to Jesus; not only because they were a vulnerable and marginalised group and he wanted to show they belonged in God's loving Kingdom, but also because they have something to teach adults in terms of the model of discipleship.

We can respond to Jesus' challenge in 6 ways by:

- viewing children through the eyes of Jesus, not by the value systems of earth, but of the kingdom of heaven
- caring for, and defending, children in a loving way, Mark 9:36
- accepting them in his name, as if they are Jesus, Mathew 18:5
- learning from the humility, faith and dependence of a child, Matthew 18:3, 4
- putting children's needs first before that of adults
- responding to the call of Christ to "feed my lambs"

TIME TO REFLECT

1. In what ways has relooking and re-evaluating Jesus' attitude towards children influenced your thinking about a child's place in church?
2. Set aside a time to pray that God will help you see Him working in the lives of children in your family, church and community.

LEARN MORE

- *Touching the Future*. A handbook for church-based children's leaders by G Dallow. Publishers, Bible Reading Fellowship.
- *Desire of Ages* by Ellen G White. Publishers, Pacific Press Publishing Association.
- *Reaching and Keeping our Teenagers*, by P Brierley. Co-published by Christian Research, Crusaders and Youth for Christ.
- *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance*, by R Dudley. Published by LA Sierra University Press.
- *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, by G Barna. Published by Regal.
- *Children in the Heart of God*, by D Gidney. Published by Kingsway Communications.
- *Shouting in the Temple*, by L Jenkins. Published by Touch.

¹ *Touching the Future*. A handbook for church-based children's leaders by G Dallow. Publishers, Bible Reading Fellowship.

² *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, by G Barna. Published by Regal.

³ *Reaching and Keeping our Teenagers*, by P Brierley. Published by Christian Research & Crusaders and Youth for Christ.

PREVENTING PRODIGALS

Losing faith in church

Seventh-day Adventist in the 1960s numbered around 1.55 million worldwide. Tom Ashlock, then an associate in the General Conference Sabbath School Department, wondered what would have happened if the Church had never done any evangelism but had consistently retained all the children growing up in Adventist homes.

He got out his calculator, started with the number of Adventist families in 1848, considered the average family size in each generation up to the time he was working, and made a shocking discovery. Without evangelism, but just by maintaining Adventist children in the church, there would have been 128 million Adventists at the time of his calculation: the 1960s! 50 years later the world wide church has only reached 15½ million. Every Sabbath morning the largest group of missing people from church are the ones needing to be reclaimed.¹

In 1973 Ila Zbarashuk estimated that 50% of Adventist adolescents sever their connection with the church. She found:

10 main reasons for becoming a prodigal

1. church membership without personal conversion
2. impersonal, uncaring attitude on the part of older members
3. phony-appearing lives of adult members
4. no sense of relevance to needs
5. religion didn't make a difference in own life and didn't want to be a hypocrite
6. absence of thinking for oneself
7. misplaced emphasis with non-essentials too important
8. academy (church school) disciplinary methods
9. preoccupation with organisation on the part of leaders
10. quality of sermons²

Since the 1990s the Youth Department has relied on the Valuegenesis surveys, done by the youth in the church, for guidance on how to understand their needs.

At a meeting of Youth Directors, the 2007 Valuegenesis study of the Trans-European Division was discussed and they concluded from its results there are

6 ways the church can prevent prodigals.

- A church that is intentional about young people: that knows the names and is current with email/mobile addresses.
- A church that makes young people feel they have a place, that they are valued and can be involved.
- A church that designates a Young Adult elder and a special budget to assist this age group.
- A church that is committed to developing tools/mechanisms to evaluate what contribution they can bring to the church.

- A church that is willing to undertake a careful review of the membership lists (including non-baptised youth) and is committed to staying in contact with anyone who for whatever reason has taken a break from active church fellowship.
- A church that regularly communicates clearly to its youth what they can expect from the church, and informs them in turn what they can do to assist the mission of the church.³

Parents pass on their faith

Parents' primary role is to teach their children how to think and act in their relationship to God and those He has created. Exodus 12:26, 37; Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:1-7; 31:12-13; Psalm 78:4-6; Proverbs 22:6; all include the idea that the parents are to pass on the story of God's salvation to their children.

God created each individual with the ability to respond to a parent's spiritual teaching in a positive or negative way. God the Father experiences the lows and joys a parent feels when a child rejects or accepts their advice. Genesis 3:1-9, Luke 15:7. The cry of the heavenly Father "where are you?" is echoed in every book of the Bible and heard in the call of Jesus to "follow me". Mathew 4:19. Unfortunately not all prodigals respond to his call.

The most quoted text in the Bible is part of God's advice to parents, "Hear O Israel... these commandments that I give you... impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Repeated morning and evening, touched and kissed in its place on the doorframe of an orthodox Jew's home, this text outlines how generation to generation discipleship was to be passed on.

Studies confirm the primacy of parents in mentoring and discipling. In Christian homes where this does not happen 80% leave church before the age of eighteen. In homes where parents actively, lovingly mentor, the retention rate is 80%.⁴

Over the last two decades the results of the Valuegenesis studies have not altered in the area of what is the greatest influence in a child's life. It is the parents' faith, love and support that is the number one factor. The survey lists the:

8 key aspects of spiritual parenting

- quality family worship
- learning to help at home and doing service activities as a family
- mother sharing her faith with the child
- father sharing his faith with a child
- loving, caring, supporting parents
- parents set limits and exercise control
- parent/child frequently communicate
- parents often help with school work⁵

A joint role

Presently the statistics show that out of every 100 children born into church-attending families, children give their lives to Jesus at these ages:

32% at 5-12
4% at 13-18
6% at 19-death

This adds up to 42%. What has happened to the 58%? These are the ones that lose faith in church and stop attending.

The church and parents must work together in spiritually mentoring their children. The Children's Ministries Department was set up to guide this nurturing. Combined with the Family Ministries and Pathfinder departments and church schools, it is possible to minister to our pre-teens in such a way that they can play a vital role in their church, not just when adult but now as young children of God. If they do not become active, valued and needed the probability is that they will become prodigals.

TIME TO REFLECT

1. Try to add up the number of children no longer attending your church. Now pray for each one by name.
2. Think of ways you can help your church leaders and parents reduce that number of prodigals.

LEARN MORE

- *Reaching and Keeping our Teenagers*, by P Brierley. Co-published by Christian Research, Crusaders and Youth for Christ.
- *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance*, by R Dudley. Published by LA Sierra University Press.
- *We Can Keep Them in the Church*, by M Tetz with G Hopkins. Published by Pacific Press Publishing Association.
- *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, by G Barna. Published by Regal.
- *Post Modern Children's Ministries*, by I Beckwith. Published by Zondervan.
- General Conference Family Ministries planbooks
 - Parenting for Discipleship
 - It Takes a Family
 - Family Evangelism(available on disc from the BUC Family Ministries Department)

¹ *It Takes a Family*. General Conference Family Ministries Planbook.

² *Journal of Adventist Youth ministry*, Autumn 1992, by Dr B Gane, p 58-69.

³ *Encounter* 2008, British Union Conference Youth Department magazine.

⁴ Barna Research Report – 15 November 1999.

⁵ *Family Friendly Church*, by N Johnsson with W Oliver. Published by Advent Source.

MENTORING MISSIONARIES

Children are called to be missionaries too

A dictionary definition of a missionary is "one who is sent on a mission, especially sent to do religious or charitable work in some area or foreign country". It was Jesus who called His followers to become missionaries, "Go into all the world and make disciples" Matthew 28:18-20. When a child accepts Jesus as their Saviour they too are called by Him to be a missionary where they live now, and maybe later on in life in a foreign country.

12 reasons why God calls children to be missionaries

- **We belong to the church world-wide.** When children become Christians they should learn about their family.
- **In heaven there will be people of all nationalities.** We need to prepare children for heaven.
- **Jesus died for all, not for some.** Anything on His heart should be on our hearts and on children's hearts too.
- **Mission is a theme throughout the Bible** and we have a responsibility to teach the whole truth.
- **Mission is an activity for the whole church,** including children.
- **God has important roles for children in His world-wide purposes,** and always has done
- **Children can be involved in mission now,** particularly through praying and as givers; but some will go as God's ambassadors too. Children are some of the most effective intercessors and missionaries because they have uncluttered faith. They are world-changers.
- **Children are missionaries now and of the future.** We should prepare and involve every child in what God wants him or her to do and be their role model.
- **It can help children deal more effectively with the non-Christian culture around them** and warn them of the dangers of getting involved in non-Christian practices.
- **It can help non-Christian children become Christians,** through learning from their Christian friends how to become a Christian.
- **Participation in God's world-wide purposes is exciting.**
- **Children are naturally interested in everything around them.** Mission is a colourful topic bursting with activity and passionate action. It's fun, moving and rewarding.¹

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

The promise of Jesus to his early missionaries "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you", Acts 1:8, is promised also to children.

4 promises of God to pour the Holy Spirit on children

- "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants... One will say, 'I belong to the Lord'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and will take the name Israel." Isaiah 44:3-5
- "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy." Joel 2:28, 29
- "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off." Acts 2:39
- "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your children, or their descendants, from this time on and forever, says the Lord." Isaiah 59:21

5 examples of spiritual mentors

Throughout the Bible there are examples of how God has used gifted teachers to help the younger ones become spiritually empowered:

- Samuel was taught by Eli
- Ruth's role model was Naomi
- Elijah mentored Elisha
- Jesus taught the disciples
- Paul trained John Mark, Timothy and Titus

Mentors are still needed by the younger ones in the church.

6 ways to become an effective mentor

- Accept the call from God to be a mentor.
- Pray to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Receive training in children's ministries.
- Recognise learning has changed and use the 4 main keys to teaching today's children:
 1. Provide many opportunities for hands-on activities.
 2. Connect teaching to real life, and include many opportunities for problem solving and creativity.
 3. Focus on understanding rather than facts and give children time to reflect on what they have learned.
 4. Focus on understanding children and building relationships with them.²
- Take time to understand the five keys to interacting with the 21st century child:
 1. Children's individual families differ in structure and function: single parents, step parents, working mothers, etc.
 2. Children mature earlier, both physically and mentally, and they are more independent.

3. Children learn from the media, they learn in groups, and they are expected to know more than children of previous generations.
 4. Children are growing up in a post-modern society that does not provide leadership on moral issues and rejects religious values.
 5. Children are growing up in a multi-cultural society. They are expected to relate to people from all cultures and values.³
- Build a team of those gifted in children's ministries who will work with church leaders, and the parents, in running a missionary mentoring ministry for children.

12 ways children benefit from a mentoring ministry

- know they are special to God
- feel valued and wanted by the church
- experience the thrill of being in partnership with God
- find church interesting and relevant
- willingly take on a church office
- commit their tithes and collections for the growth of the church at home and abroad
- attract their friends to God and lead them to experience the gift of salvation
- decide to eventually marry an active Christian
- role model the love of God to their children
- partake in the outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit
- live for Jesus now and live with him throughout eternity

TIME TO REFLECT

1. Who has had the most spiritual impact in your life?
2. Identify which children may be looking to you for support and inspiration.
3. Pray that you can identify parents, members and leaders who can be instrumental in setting up a mentoring ministry.

LEARN MORE

- *Teaching the Faith*, by D Habenicht and L Burton. Published by Review & Herald Publishing Association.
- *Rock Solid Kids*, by L Fowler. Published by Gospel Light.
- *Pray for the World*, WEC International, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8SZ.
- *Window on the World*, WEC International, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8SZ.
- *You Can Change the World*, WEC International, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8SZ.
- *How to Help Your Child Really Love Jesus*, by D Habenicht. Published by Review & Herald Publishing Association.

¹ *WEC International*, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8SZ.

² *Teaching the Faith*, by D J Habenicht and L Burton. Published by Review & Herald Publishing Association.

³ *Ibid.*

ADULT MISSION STRATEGY

God has a plan

The Holy Spirit, who moved on the face of the earth, created order out of chaos. The result was a wonderful functioning planet. Creation was a success because it was carefully planned. Salvation was planned too, even "before the foundation of the world" 1Peter 1:20. For your mission to function well and have successful results, you too need to plan.

6 keys to mission strategy

- 1 The most vital key in planning is to bathe the venture in prayer and do as Jesus directed and pray to the Lord of the harvest so that He will send out labourers into His harvest, Matthew 9:36, 37. Apostle Paul, the greatest of all missionaries, knew it was the power of prayer that enabled him. He often asked those in the churches he set up to

"continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us that God would open to us a door for the word..." Colossians 4:2, 3.

- 2 Prayerfully put together an outline of the mission and a budget to take to the Pastor and church board.
- 3 Recruit the team:
 - Ask the pastor and church board to recommend names of those who have a heart for God and a passion for His children. This can include teens and people from various backgrounds and cultures.
- 4 Meet with these people individually to share your vision of mission and discover their areas of giftedness and willingness to give their time and talent.
- 5 Set up a meeting of the most responsive where they will:
 - ◆ choose a spiritual leader who will need 11 leadership skills:
 - the ability to encourage an atmosphere of prayer
 - be a caring team leader
 - understand the world of a child
 - explore a range of possible ventures
 - have a good rapport with children and parents
 - find out the talents of the team members
 - be respected by the church leaders
 - take time to receive training
 - be willing to listen to others
 - put the church child protection procedures in place
 - share their vision for mission
 - ◆ discuss an overview of the plans by asking:
 - how will we get the information/material/funding required?
 - who will collect it?
 - when will we begin?
 - where will it be held?
 - what will we do?

- ◆ develop a plan that will include 10 elements of a mission strategy:
 - Biblical mandate – what is God's purpose for this mission?
 - Vision – what does God want us to do?
 - Mission – why do we exist?
 - Values – how will we interact with one another?
 - Target – who are we trying to reach?
 - Strategy – how will we reach the target audience?
 - Ministries – what other church departments are needed for our strategy to work?
 - Goals – what will be our long and short term barometers of success?
 - Personnel and structures – who will do the tasks and how?
 - Evaluation – did we achieve God's purpose and vision? Are we succeeding?¹
 - ◆ Set dates for launching the ministry and a calendar of events which will include the start date, time and place of venue.
 - ◆ Find out the best time, day and place for regular committee meetings.
- 6 Learn from those who have experienced such a mission. Visit their project or have them come and teach the team.
- 7 Meet for regular team meetings which will include at least 8 Agenda items.
- prayer
 - planning future events
 - evaluating past events
 - refocusing the vision of the mission
 - supporting the team members' individual needs
 - sharing about how God is working with them and those whose lives they are touching
 - training for growth and spirituality in the area for which they are responsible
 - making sure everyone is happily fulfilling their role
- 8 Listen to the responses and ideas of the children; include them in your planning.
- 9 Prepare the church in 5 ways:
- ask that the mission project be focused on in the members private prayers, at small group meetings and during the Sabbath worships
 - frequently advertise in the church bulletin, on the notice board and Sabbath morning announcement time
 - involve the children, give them opportunity to share with the church their excitement of working with Jesus
 - explain how it will be budgeted
 - describe what support is needed from them

A structured approach to mission is necessary. All types of evangelism reap a harvest when the soil is well prepared for receiving the seed. A well prepared mission strategy will take time to produce but ultimately it is the most effective way involving adults and children in mission.

TIME TO REFLECT

1. Where do you see your role in this strategy?
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to protect this endeavour from the schemes of Satan.

LEARN MORE

- *Launching a Missionary Congregation*, by R Warren. Published C.P.A.S.
- *Church Planting*, by P Roennfeldt. Published by the Church Growth Department of the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- *Leading Children*, by P Frank. Published by St John's Nottingham and Children's Ministry.
- *Bringing Children to Faith*, by P Frank. Published by Scripture Union and CPAS.
- *Building a Team*, by A Back. Published by Children's Ministry.

¹ *Church Planting*, by P Roennfeldt. Published by Ministerial Association, Trans-European Division.

CHILDREN IN MISSION STRATEGY

Children are a part of God's plan of salvation

God has never overlooked the children. They were a part of His plan from the creation of Adam and Eve, who were "to be fruitful and multiply" Genesis 1:28.

It was through the birth of a promised child that salvation came into this world, Genesis 3:15. "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

Adults are a part of God's plan of salvation

The family has always been the key to sharing and passing on faith. Supported by the spiritual leaders and Godly monarchs, parents have been asked by God to make the commitment that "we will not hide from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord... which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands." Psalm 78:4-7.

Children want to pass on their faith

The Valuegenesis, and other surveys, have come to the conclusion that children are honest and do not want to be hypocritical when it comes not only to living their faith but also in sharing their faith. They want to be involved in missionary work. Here are:

14 principles involving children in missions

- Guide the children into a personal relationship with Christ.
- Have a variety of age-appropriate outreach activities for the children.
- Realise that children, especially younger ones, prefer group activities to solitary ones.
- Compile a list of missionary activities and let the children select the ones they like best
- Get the children's suggestions for missionary activities.
- Explain very carefully to them God's plan of salvation.
- Present God as a Friend of children.
- Train them in different kinds of missionary work, according to their preferences and abilities.
- Practise the principles of Christianity rather than merely teach the doctrines of a religion.
- Emphasize the joy that comes with doing missionary work.
- Admit to them that although missionary work can be difficult, it can also be fun.
- Explain that God expects everyone to be a missionary for Him.
- Realise that they are children and not fully grown missionaries. Allow them the joy of childhood.
- Understand that their personalities influence their relationship with God and how to serve Him.¹

13 ways for empowering missionary children

- Make prayer a relevant and exciting priority in every aspect of mission.

- Create a mission "picture" for the children that is powerful, visual and easy to imagine.
- Give Bible examples of children serving God
 - Samuel. 1 Samuel 2:18-21
 - the captive maid. 2 Kings 5
 - King Josiah. 2 Kings 22:1, 2
 - the boy Jesus. Luke 2:41-52
 - Timothy. 2 Timothy 3:15²
- Tell stories about historical characters who decided to follow God as children.
 - Polycarp, who became a church leader and martyr, shared his faith from the age of 9.
 - Matthew Henry, a Bible commentary writer whose work is still highly valued, was 10 when he promised to work for God.
 - Isaac Watts wrote the words for hymns from the age of 9.
 - John Andrews, the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary to Europe gave his life to God's work at the age of 13. His daughter was 12 when she travelled with him as a missionary.³
- Explain clearly, that the role of a missionary includes a variety of ways to serve God and care for people in their own country as well as in distant lands.
- Encourage them to dream big dreams. Develop the strategy based on their dreams.
- Emphasise team work. "Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a part of it." 1 Corinthians 13:27.
- Help them discover their spiritual gifts. "There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service but the same Lord." 1 Corinthians 12:4, 5.
- Model good character. Praise and correct a child to help in their character development.
- Train them to be competent in what they do by sharing knowledge, experience, confidence and commitment to excellence.
- Allow them to be bold in their convictions. Motivate them to approach mission as an adventure with others for God.
- Model servant leadership. Point to Jesus as the model of one who loves and empowers others. Encourage humility and thoughtfulness for all in their team.
- Give time not only to the project but to mentoring each child. Seize every teachable moment. Express unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness. When in the wrong, admit it and keep promises.⁴

Enabling children to fulfil God's call to be his missionaries is a great challenge and a great joy. It takes commitment, time and training as well as a team, or at least one other individual, to envision the young members of God's family to become missionaries.

TIME TO REFLECT

1. Meditate on God's plan for adults and children to share together in mission.
2. Pray for God to show you how to make time to envision children with mission.

LEARN MORE

- *Coaching Your kids to be Leaders: the keys to unlocking their potential*, by P Williams. Published by Warner Faith.
- *Mission in Action*, by M Ingham. Published by CPAS and Covenanters.
- *Leading Children*, by P Franks. Published by St John's Nottingham & Children's Ministry.
- *Shouting in the Temple*, by L Jenkins. Published by Touch.
- *Christian Life & Children*, by P Frank, M Summerfield and R Roff. Published by London School of Theology, Crusaders and CPAS.
- *Adventist Home*, by E G White. Published by Pacific Press Publishing Association.

¹ *How to Involve Children in Missionary Work*, by G Trotman, Children's Ministries director for Inter-American Division, SDA Church. (Available at Children's Ministries Department, BUC.)

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Coaching Your Kids to be Leaders*, by P Williams. Published by Warner Faith (Time Warner book group).

FUTURE FRUITFULNESS

I am with you always

Children are no different to adults in the area of personal growth; training is necessary. There is no college course for them to attend, but as a leader you can develop their skills in practical ways.

The children's leader is someone the children will look up to and emulate. The most important role modelling skill they can give is to look to God for the assurance that He will call, choose and equip every one. A Bible promise from the lips of Jesus is one that can be committed to memory, "And Jesus said, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples... and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.' Amen." Matthew 29:19, 20.

Every child, and adult, has the promise of Jesus that He is always with them while they share their love for Him as modern day missionaries.

11 training tips

- As you plan a programme, identify the activities and responsibilities you will give the children. Ask specific children to lead out.
- Give them ideas of how to perform the task.
- Pray with them individually, giving them an opportunity to voice to God their fears and need for His guidance.
- If possible, pair the children to work together. Timid children are often overlooked and have hidden abilities. Twin them up with another child who can encourage their growth, or support them yourself but do not take over.
- Children are quick to learn by watching a proficient person. You may want to take them to a "live" programme in another church to gain skills.
- Ask the children for their suggestions. Listen carefully and talk them through how their ideas would best work.
- Make sure each child understands how their part fits into the overall ministry and in each event.
- Explain how they can best work alongside others.
- Encourage them to frequently discuss things with a mentor.
- Do feedback sessions after events to discuss how things went; to praise each child and ask them how things can be done next time and whether they need improving.
- Recognise that children need many opportunities to develop their skills.¹

How children learn

The farmer understands how to grow his crop to reap a good harvest. It is the same for the children's leader. Learn about how children learn skills and how they are taught at school. Here is a brief introduction

3 learning modes

- Auditory, where 60% of what they know is acquired through listening and talking.

- Visual, where watching and looking are vital.
- Movement and touch, where interacting and moving while doing something enables learning.

Children, and adults, use all three learning modes. As they grow older certain ones are prioritised. On average, out of a group of 10, 4 will be visual learners, 2 auditory and 4 need movement and touch.

4 types of learners

- Common sense learners, who ask the question, "How can I do this? How does it actually work?" These are practical children
- Imaginative learners' questions are, "Why do I need to know this? Why am I learning this?" These are relational children.
- Analytic learners ask, "What do I need to know?" These are children wanting the facts.
- Dynamics ask, "What can this become?" These are actively enthusiastic children.²

Equipped adult leaders

The skills to nurture children can be gained not only by practice but by:

- attending the training programmes run by the Children's Ministries department, eg:
 - CORE Skills training weekend that includes
 - Module 1** Understanding the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual development of children.
 - Module 2** Evaluate current leadership skills, gifts, strengths and weaknesses. Identify ways for personal development.
 - Module 3** Discern how learning styles and culture differ so that effective planning of events can be done creatively.
 - Module 4** Reflect on the many methods available to evangelise children and how to implement suitable strategies.
 - Module 5** Share insights on caring for the whole child through providing a safe environment physically, emotionally and spiritually.
 - Module 6** Develop ways children, within the church and home, can experience spiritual growth.
- Annual church officer training days.
- Gracelink DVD and manual – available from the BUC Children's Ministries department.
- Christian Life and Children. A DVD and training manual.
- The "Learn More" section of each chapter includes highly recommended material and so does the resource list.

- Find a mentor. Your Union, Conference or Mission department director can help you in this area. Most of all it is your relationship with God that will "grow" your skills, taking time to have a daily relationship with Jesus through prayer and study.
- Ask God to enlarge your areas of giftedness.
- Keep a written list of your mission needs. Meditate on each need, writing down the ideas the Holy Spirit is giving you.
- Share with your prayer partner the needs and God's answers.
- Praise God, with the children, for the way He is guiding your mission.

TIME TO REFLECT

1. In what ways has God equipped you? Consider the ways you learn best.
2. Ask God to guide you to ways you can learn more to equip the children.

LEARN MORE

- *Leading Children*, by P Frank. Published by St John's Nottingham and Children's Ministries.
- *GraceLink* seminar DVD and Manual – BUC Children's Ministries department.
- *Free Gifts for Everybody*, by R Johnston and G Wilde. Published by Cook.
- *Christian Life and Children*, DVD and manual, by the London Bible College. Published by Crusaders and CPAS.
- *The Children's Ministries Coordinator*. Published by the Children's Ministries Department of the SDA General Conference. (No author.)

¹ *Leading Children*, by P Frank. Published by St John's Nottingham and Children's Ministries.

² *GraceLink* seminar DVD and Manual – BUC Children's Ministries Department.

EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Fulfilling prophecy

God's promise is to pour out His Spirit in the last days, not just on old men but on our sons and daughters. Joel 2:28, 29. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to enable:

4 areas of ministry

- Witnessing about Jesus, Acts 1:8.
- Serving one another, 1 Peter 4:10.
- Building up the church, Ephesians 4:12, 13.
- Giving praise to God.

3 avenues of giftedness

- *Gifts of the Spirit.* This is a God-given ability for a particular Christian service.
- *Natural talents.* These are given to bring glory to God as well as benefit the church.
- *Fruit of the Spirit.* These are character qualities such as love, joy, peace, patience and kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self control. Galatians 5:22, 23.

A group of children will exhibit a lot of the spiritual gifts. As a leader you will need the gift of discernment to enable the children to identify and use the gifts, talents and fruits of the spirit.

7 ways to discover gifts

1. Read how they were active in the people of Bible times
 - Judges 4:4-16, Deborah
 - Acts 8:26-40, Philip
 - Acts 2:14-41, Peter
 - Acts 9:36-39, Tabitha
 - Acts 27:21-26, Paul
 - Acts 6:1-15, Stephen
 - Acts 11:21-30, Barnabas
 - 3 John 1-8, Gaius
2. Pray for guidance
3. Think about what the children enjoy doing.
4. Ask others what abilities they discern in the children.
5. Give them opportunities to take part in a variety of ministries.
6. Evaluate how they get on in a new situation.
7. Share with each child on an individual basis:
 - discover what they enjoy doing
 - how they feel God is helping them
 - encourage them to go to others to find out what particular gifts others see growing in their life
 - help them to identify areas of service they can get involved in

16 Biblical definitions of giftedness

Discerning 1 Corinthians 12:10

Definition: The ability to know the difference between true and false teachings; insight into others' personalities and spiritual condition
To keep a group of Christians doctrinally pure

Desire: Calling insincere or phony Christians to account, being a counsellor,

Ministry examples: teaching, giving advice

Languages 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28

Definition: The ability to learn languages quickly

Desire: To translate the Word of God for people to understand it; to glorify God

Ministry examples: Being a Bible translator, working with Christian literature

Administering 1 Corinthians 12:28

Definition: The ability to organise people and systems to accomplish God's work

Desire: work

Ministry examples: To avoid wasteful effort in accomplishing God's will
Being a director, organising a project using computer skills

Evangelising Ephesians 4:11

Definition: The ability to present the Gospel in ways that produce new converts

Desire: To see people accept Christ as Saviour

Ministry examples: Public speaking, counselling, being a friend, winning people one-on-one

Showing mercy Romans 12:8

Definition: The ability to offer care and comfort to the suffering

Desire: To help the hurting

Ministry examples: Working in a hospital, visiting the sick or elderly, working in a soup kitchen

Offering hospitality Romans 12:13; 1Peter 4:9, 10

Definition: The ability to help people feel welcomed and comfortable when they are guests

Desire: To include people, making them feel at ease

Ministry examples: Being a friend, inviting people into your home, serving refreshments

Praying Colossians 1:9-12

Definition: The ability to persevere in intercession

Desire: To see answers to prayer on behalf of others' needs

Ministry examples: Being in a prayer group, spending time in prayer, learning new ways to pray, teaching others how to pray

Using craftsmanship *Exodus 35:30-35*
Definition: The ability to make things with skill and beauty
Desire: To create and build things for ministry use
Ministry examples: Being an artist, writer, carpenter, actor, painter, etc

Prophesying *1 Corinthians 12:10, 28*
Definition: The ability to speak God's truth directly and persuasively
Desire: To convince others of biblical truths
Ministry examples: Preaching, public speaking, witnessing projects, outreach work

Serving *Romans 12:7*
Definition: The ability to joyfully help others in practical ways, often behind the scenes
Desire: To meet needs and be involved, usually involving a hands-on approach
Ministry examples: Lending a hand with fix-up projects, sending thank-you cards

Teaching *Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:8*
Definition: The ability to help others learn, making complicated things interesting and easy to grasp
Desire: To study, analyse and present truth in a systematic way
Ministry examples: Teaching a class, coaching a team

Encouraging *Romans 12:8*
Definition: The ability to motivate people for service through encouraging words
Desire: To work with people one-on-one to inspire and build their confidence
Ministry examples: Being a friend, counselling, coaching a team

Giving *Romans 12:8*
Definition: The ability to give generously, with a joyful heart
Desire: To use money and talents wisely to accomplish God's work
Ministry examples: Helping to fund projects with monetary gifts, directing a fund raising project

Leading *Ephesians 4:11*
Definition: The ability to envision goals and inspire people to reach them
Desire: To help a group accomplish its goals
Ministry examples: Serving as a committee chairperson, organising a project that involves other people

Having faith *1 Corinthians 12:9*
Definition: The ability to trust in God's power and working, even in the face of opposition

Desire: To recognise the working of God in situations that seem impossible
Ministry examples: Starting new ministries, leading a prayer group, encouraging a discouraged friend

**Working miracles/
healing** 1 Corinthians 12:28

Definition: The ability to be used by God for His miraculous workings

Desire: To see God do the miraculous

Ministry examples: Leading in healing ministries, inspiring others to have greater faith ¹
(if valid for today)

Involving Children's Creative Gifts

Churches where children are involved in the church service are the ones that are growing the fastest! How can you work with your worship co-ordinators, pastor and elder to involve the children in church in different ways? Here are some ideas to start you thinking.

Art

- Invite children to design your church's bulletin cover.
- Children could also draw pictures that can be scanned into the computer and displayed in a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate a hymn, the sermon, the children's story, or a scripture reading.
- The children's department could help the children design banners for the church, or seasonal decorations to decorate the church notice-board, or a plain wall in the church.
- Give out unlined index cards and crayons and ask children to draw their prayer requests, praises, thank you prayers, etc. Invite them to bring the cards forward during the prayer time, and use them to create a display in a special part of your church.

Music

- Encourage children to work alongside a musical and trusted person (who has had full Criminal Record Bureau clearance to work with children) to create a special piece of music for church. This enables the child to be mentored into the use of their music in worship.
- Invite children to play the music whilst the offering is being collected.
- Have a range of simple musical instruments that small children can use during one or more of the praise songs each week.

Writing

- Invite children to take different scriptures that you will be using in your services, and to rewrite them in their own words. Perhaps they could work with an adult who will help them explore their ideas and guide their work.
- Invite children to write their own psalms of praise which can be used in a church service.
- Let children write their own letters to God, or poems, to be read out during a special service, or to create a small booklet which can be sold to raise money for a mission project.

Children are enthusiastic when they realise how God enables them to use their natural talents and develop new gifts. Their excitement about being on "His mission" will exceed your expectations. Rejoice with them as you experience together the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days of the world's history.

TIME TO REFLECT

1. Reflect on the list of Bible characters in this chapter to see if you are gifted in a similar way.
2. Ask God to help you identify the gifts of the children in your church and how to "grow" them.

LEARN MORE

- *Free Gifts for Everybody*, by R Johnston and G Wilde. Published by Cook.
- *Touching the future*, by G Dallow. Published by Bible Reading Fellowship
- *The Acts of the Apostles*, by E G White. Published by Pacific Press Publishing Association
- *Evangelism*, by E G White. Published by Pacific Press Publishing Association

¹ This chapter is adapted from *Free Gifts for Everybody*, by R Johnston and G Wilde. Published by Cook.

GET READY, GET SET, GO

Spiritual battle

Inspired and gifted by the Holy Spirit; mentored and trained; full of energy and God's love: now is the time to involve children in mission.

Children are aware that they live in a hostile world where there is pain and injustice. A Christian child knows there is an evil power at work, Satan and his angels. In Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul says how the power of the Lord will overcome the devil. God's children must put on the gospel armour:

- the breastplate of righteousness
- shoes of the gospel of peace
- the shield of faith
- the helmet of salvation
- the sword of the spirit
- the word of God

Most important of all, putting on each item must be accompanied by prayer, "supplication in the Spirit", so the "gospel can be boldly made known".

Although it is important to emphasise that the battle is dangerous, there is also nothing to fear as Jesus has won the war and we are on the victorious side. "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together", Romans 8:16, 17.

6 styles of being a missionary

GIVER

- How? - they use their money, time and talents to help people learn of Jesus. Children can be encouraged to be givers by helping to raise funds or helping orphan children in Africa, or buy shoes for children in the mission field.
- Bible model - the story of the little boy who gave his lunch to Jesus (John 6:6-13) to confirm that God honours those who give what they have and can use even their small gifts to advance the work of God.

PRAY-ERS

- How? - they are children who show concern when they hear of needs. They would be the first to ask Jesus for help. These children can pray for missionaries in difficult foreign fields so that the gospel story can be shared with others. Use a prayer walk in their neighbourhood to pray for different families.
- Bible model - share with them the story of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8). Assure them that God never plugs His ears or asks them to stop bothering Him.

WELCOMERS

- How? - these children befriend newcomers and make them adjust to their new environment as they share the story of Jesus with them. They are curious and are keenly interested in other cultures. They love to ask questions about how others live. Encourage them to befriend children who are different from them, or children who are difficult to get along with.
- Bible model - share the story of Philip and the Ethiopian, Acts 8:26-40, showing them how God uses welcoming to spread the gospel to other countries.

- SENDERS** - they partner with missionaries by caring, praying and giving to meet their needs. They can help missionary families before or after they leave.
- How? - provide opportunities for these children to prepare a "birthday package" to be sent to a missionary child. They can host a picnic or party for missionary children on furlough.
- Bible model - show children that God is pleased when they sacrifice, support and help missionaries to serve better, just as in the story of the Philippian church and their care for Paul, Philippians 4:14-19.

CONNECTORS

- How? - do you have children who love to organise projects and who encourage others to be involved? These children can be the connectors. They can organise missionary projects for others to share the gospel story too.
- Bible model - inspire them with the story of Naaman's little maid, 2 Kings 5:1-14, that God can use children to perform this role well.

GOERS

- How? - they are children who love to take the gospel to others. Many children already possess this simple faith and willing spirit and find it easy to talk to their friends about Jesus. Suggest a variety of ways to do this missionary work.
- Bible model - tell the story of the apostle Paul who is not afraid to go and share the gospel everywhere, Acts 16:6-10.¹

Frequently, the word "mission" is linked with serving Jesus in foreign countries. But mission is also to take place in one's own country. The gospel is needed here and abroad.

Missionaries at home

Being home missionaries is perhaps the most challenging to adults, but children have few inhibitions when it comes to inviting friends and family members to church activities for non-members.

Where it is safe to do so, you can encourage your children to witness to their friends in simple ways. One of the best ways that they can witness is by being a caring friend to those that they know, showing love, and unselfishness, and standing up for what is right, even when it's difficult. This can be hard to do, and they will need your encouragement. But there are other things children can do to help others learn more about Jesus.

30 ways to be a "home" missionary

- Children often love to help distribute outreach cards. Teach them how to be good witnesses by only walking on pathways, and being courteous. Always have an adult close by in the same road.
- Encourage children to pray regularly for the conversion of a few people they know.
- Have a theme party for your child's birthday, such as Noah's Ark, and show a Bible Story video at the party, and give tiny books about Noah in the party bags, with plastic animals, rainbow stickers, etc.
- Invite all their friends to Holiday Bible School.
- When a new baby is born, look in Christian bookshops for a gift book for the parents, one that has some spiritual content too.
- Develop a really lively and interesting family worship together, and then let your children invite a friend for supper, and to share in the worship time. Light some candles and create a cosy atmosphere.
- If your children are in a special event at church, invite non-Christian relatives along to share the occasion, or video the event and show it to family members.
- Buy or design and make a witnessing T-shirt for your children to wear. Make sure it is tasteful and attractive.
- Involve the church children in a community outreach project, or aid project, and invite the local paper to write a report about them.
- Children can have pen-pals, and email friends with whom they can share their faith in a non-threatening way.
- Do all you can to make sure that your children are delighting in their Christianity, and that their experience of God is fresh, exciting and enjoyable. They will be naturally exuberant about their faith, and that is an incredible witness to others.
- Giving out invitations to special programmes at church and other literature, eg Voice of Prophecy cards.
- Serving as greeters at evangelistic meetings.
- Using computer skills to create posters, cards, etc.
- Operating projectors, etc.
- Singing, telling stories, etc.
- Babysitting at church while parents attend services.
- Doing Bible lessons with their peers.
- Helping the elderly with Bible lessons.
- Studying the Bible with shut-in members in the community.
- Helping people with special needs.
- Preparing care packages for the poor in the community (Children may put Bible lessons in the packages).
- Preaching at Pathfinder and youth evangelistic meetings.
- Adopting a grandparent and studying the Bible with him/her or do helpful acts.
- Getting permission from the paediatric unit, old folks home or hospital and giving story-telling and puppet shows for the patients there once a month.
- Taking a singing group to cheer the residents of a geriatric unit.
- Joining a prayer group for children to pray for the salvation of people.
- Wearing a special T-shirt on a special day and telling everyone they meet on the street John 3:16, while giving a token (small book, bookmark, tract, etc.)
- Making 'God is Love' bookmarks and other simple projects.
- Give gift-wrapped books to people on the street or in a shopping centre.²

Supporting missionaries abroad

Sabbath School includes a mission story so children are used to hearing about what is happening in other countries. To involve children in more than just listening to stories is the children's leader's responsibility. The Adventist Development & Relief Agency will have projects for children to support as well as the annual ADRA appeal.

- Launch a project by holding a mission fellowship lunch.
 - Plan a potluck featuring the country you are going to support. Invite the children's families and friends and the whole church. Label the foods by name and country of origin so people will know what they are eating. Check vegetarian cookbooks from your local library for other ideas. If you have people in your area from the country you have chosen to help ask them for recipes or decoration ideas. This is a good way to get them involved.
 - Plan interesting things for the children to do when they first arrive. This will encourage the children to arrive on time so they won't miss anything fun! Learn words of the language of the country you are helping, for instance, count 1 to 10.
 - Show a mission DVD from that country.
 - Colour a flag. Let each child colour one flag. Decorate your Sabbath School room with these flags, or mount them on dowels and use in the Thirteenth Sabbath programme.
 - Reading corner. Make a cosy reading corner with a bright rug and cushions. On a low table or shelf, display picture books concerning the country chosen. Check the children's travel sections of your local library for interesting books. National Geographic magazines would also be useful.
 - Make a missions bank. Provide jars, stickers, and labels reading "For the Children of the country you have chosen" and have the children take the "banks" home and fill the jars with coins during the quarter. Each week show the children how your own bank is filling and ask them how they are doing. Send a note to the parents, asking them to help find ways for the children to fill their banks for missions. A week or two before Thirteenth Sabbath, remind the children to bring their banks to Sabbath School. This will boost your mission offering!
 - Invite a guest. Find out whether there are people from the country you have chosen living in your area. Put an announcement of your need in the church newsletter or church bulletin. If you find people from those areas - invite them to visit your class. Ask them to come in their traditional costume if they have one, and to bring interesting pictures, crafts, or clothes from their country to show. Prepare some questions to ask your visitors, and give them the questions ahead of time.³
- Mission Camps
 - A 2-3 day programme to inspire children's involvement in missions/missionary work.
 - Children get to listen to stories of mission heroes in the Bible and in the Christian world.
 - Children get to meet and interact with real missionaries.
- Mission Festival/Fair
 - A weekend or a special Sunday for this emphasis.
 - Children make exhibits showing the types of missionary work and places they want to serve.
 - Introduce games, fun activities, foods and languages of various countries to children to help them understand various cultures.
- Mission Newsletter
 - Help children produce a monthly or bi-weekly newsletter to tell the church about missionary projects done by the children.
 - Children can illustrate or write brief news clips.

- Mission Clubs
 - Children meet regularly for hands-on learning about missions.
 - They study some missionaries in the Bible, such as reading the books of Acts and Jonah and talking about Jonah's missionary service.
 - They plan and participate in "live action projects," e.g. Meals on wheels for the underprivileged, help the Community Services.
- Mission Projects
 - Children are encouraged to adopt a mission project in the neighbourhood.
 - Rally the support of the church members for these projects.
 - Have special prayers of dedication for the children who participate in the various projects.
 - Children can report periodically on the mission project and how it has impacted them.
- Mission Trips
 - Take the children on a mission field trip to a local cross-cultural outreach or one that is overseas.
 - Pray with and prepare children before going on a mission trip. Introduce them to the geography, culture, foods and language of that country.
 - After returning home, they can share the experience with members of the church.
- Prayers for Missionaries and Families
 - Children can pray for missionaries and their children in a prayer journal.
 - Use a world map as a class prompter—pray your way around the world.
 - Pray for unreached people groups whom the missionaries are working with.
- "Adopt" a Missionary Family
 - Children can correspond with the missionary children by writing letters or emails, praying for them and supporting them financially.
 - Children can gather Bibles, devotional materials, etc. to send to the missionary children.
- Mission Offerings
 - Encourage children to earn money themselves to give for special needs.
 - Have a special reading and appeal each week to highlight the importance of giving to missions.
 - Have special containers or devices in the church to allow children to go to the front to give their offerings.
- Fundraising for Mission Projects
 - Hold a walk-a-thon or bike-a-thon to raise funds for a mission project.
 - Launch a "drink a pint" milk bottle campaign—give each child an unopened pint of milk. The children take the bottle home, drink it, then clean it out and fill the bottle with coins. They then take the bottles to the church within a certain time frame.
 - Check into recycling programmes in the city. Have the children collect newspapers, cans, metal, etc. Not only will this help raise money for world missions, but it will teach children about helping the community in saving resources.

Sharing materials

Choose what you will send:

- Memory Verse Picture Rolls and the three-year felt sets are the most sought-after materials. They are always welcome anywhere.
- Other felt sets are also appreciated, especially if the instructions that originally accompanied the set are included.
- Our used books, lesson quarterlies, etc., are welcome in the English-speaking countries.

- Some parts of the world still appreciate receiving Christmas cards. They may sell them to generate funds for buying other children's material that they need. Tear off the colourful pictures and send them only; this will cut down on postage costs and deliver what the people really value.
- Attractive calendar pictures, colourful catalogues with pages picturing children, nature magazines with colour pictures, etc., are useful in any part of the world.

How to send the materials

- Pack the materials in a strong cardboard box and tie securely with string to withstand weeks of travel and possibly rough handling. Your local post office can give you good advice about packing.
- Address the box to Children's Ministries Department, then the address. Send a letter at the same time notifying the place that the box is on its way. State in the letter that you would like the material to be given to a church that needs it and will use it.
- Mark the box "Educational Material". If the box contains only printed paper materials, mark the outside "Printed Matter Only."
- Send the box by surface mail. It will take weeks, but it is by far the cheapest way.

Each year ADRA collects shoe boxes that are filled with presents. Here is ADRA's advice on what to do with the box.

- Shoeboxes can be filled with toys, clothes, toiletry items, cutlery, a plate and cup, school supplies etc. and should be nicely wrapped and clearly labelled with the appropriate age and sex. One item kids will love is a pair of flip-flops! Please make sure ALL items are NEW!
- Please do NOT include breakable items, food or sweets, toys that need batteries, medicines, or war-related items.
- all boxes need to be received by the 10 November. Boxes can be delivered to ADRA, Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JZ during business hours (Mon-Thurs 9-5 and Friday 9-noon).

Please help to bring a little happiness in the lives of orphans of Madagascar! For more information visit our website or call our office on 01923 681743.⁴

TIME TO REFLECT

1. What has been your greatest obstacle to sharing your faith in Jesus. Think of a Bible text whose promise can encourage you to overcome this problem.
2. Meditate on the various aspects of mission that your children can do. Ask for the Lord to help you choose some possible ones. Share them with your prayer partner.

LEARN MORE

- General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church
 - website www.childrensministries.gc.adventist.org
 - *Kids News Zone*, newsletter
- *Mission Possible* compiled by D Bell and R Heathfield. Published by Scripture Union and CPAS.
- *Mission in Action*, by M Ingham. Published by CPAS and Covenanters
- *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, by E G White. Published by Pacific Press Publishing Association
- *Cookbook of Outreach Ideas*. Published at www.childmin.com . Available from BUC Children's Ministries department.

Visual Aids

- New from Adventist Missions, a box set that contains a DVD with videos and music videos and a CD with programme outlines, stories, games and activities.

Initially this was done for our church schools but the GC Children's Ministries Department are promoting this Adventist Mission material as it is suitable for Sabbath School too. It:

- Demonstrates the importance of mission work around the world
- Connects geography and social studies to the world wide work of the Church
- Presents mission service as a soul-winning adventure and a worthy career
- Inspires children to support mission work through their prayers and offerings
- Instills a sense of pride and responsibility as they see how they are an important part of the world Church.

For more details look it up on the website: www.Adventist.Mission.org

- Kid's Mission Discover kit has a mission wall mural to colour that illustrates the stories for the current quarter. It contains felt figures to help tell weekly mission stories. B.J.K. Triplets, 601 Cameron, Spangle, WA 99031, USA
- WEC international
Bulstrode
Oxford Road
Gerrards Cross
Bucks
SL9 8SZ
Tel: 01753 884 631
Email: lcr:ukwec-int.org
- British & Foreign Bible Society (Bible Society)
Bible House – Stonehill Green
Westlea
Swindon
SN5 7DG
Tel: 01793 418100
Fax: 01793 418118
Internet: www.biblesociety.org.uk
- Christian Aid – UK
35 Lower Marsh
Waterloo
London
SE1 7RL
Tel: 0207 620 4444
Fax: 0207 620 0719

Books

- Children Just Like Me, by Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley (Dorling Kindersley Books, 1995). A beautifully illustrated large-format book that introduces children to many cultures through children. Includes information on the children's hobbies, homes, schools and lifestyle.
- The Great KidMission, edited by Mary Gross (Ventura Calif: Gospel Light Publishers, 1996). Contains reproducible learning activities, crafts, dramas, games and patterns.

- The Kid’s Multicultural Art Book, Alexandra Terzlar (Charlotte, vt; Williamson Publishing), contains easy-to-follow instructions for creating several crafts.
- You Can Change the World: Learning to Pray for People Around the World, by Jill Johnston, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993). This book is rich in full-colour illustrations, and helps children understand about unreached people groups.

¹ Dr L Koh, 2007 TED Advisory.

² K Holford, 2007 BUC Children's Ministries Newsletter, No. 2.

³ North American Division Children's Ministries Newsletter 1997.

⁴ Article by Dr L Koh, "Helping Children Develop 10/40 Vision". Adventist World Review, February 2006.

TELL A CHILD, TELL THE WORLD

Little Lights for Jesus?

Can children win souls for Christ? Of course, they can! Regardless of age, children can share their faith in a simple way. Graciela Martinez-Suarez from the Bolivia Adventist Church in Cuba was just five years old. She loved her Bible and the stories that thrilled her little heart about how God rescued Daniel from the lions' den, Joseph and his wicked brothers, Paul meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, etc. Hence, she enjoyed going with her mother to visit individuals who are interested in Bible studies. Of course, Graciela couldn't give Bible studies now, but she could in the future. Maybe in just a few more years, she could study the Bible with others.

Each morning Graciela looked forward to going to kindergarten. She loved her teacher Ms Taimara whom she felt was just as kind and loving as her Sabbath School teacher. She wanted Ms Taimara to go to heaven too when Jesus comes again.

"Graciela, does your family go to church?" asked Ms Taimara curiously one day.

"Yes, we are Seventh-day Adventists," replied Graciela proudly. "We are happy because we know that Jesus loves us very much. He also loves you, Teacher."

"Oh, is that right? What do you do at your church worship?" asked Ms Taimara curiously.

"We study the Bible, we pray, and we sing a lot," explained Graciela excitedly, "let me sing you some songs."

"Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me..." Graciela's sweet, childlike voice touched her teacher's heart that day. A close bond was established.

Very often at recess time while other children were out playing, Ms Taimara would ask Graciela more things about the Bible. This preschooler enthusiastically shared with her teacher the wonderful stories from the Bible and the beautiful Sabbath day.

"Ms Taimara, guess what I brought you today?" asked Graciela excitedly. "My Bible! You can keep it for a few days, but read the stories."

Not long after that Ms Taimara and Graciela's mother became good friends. Opportunity came when the Martinez-Suarez family opened their home to Ms Taimara to run a class in social studies for 4-year olds. After a few years of studying the Bible with her, she made the decision to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Today, Graciela is a junior, but Ms Taimara is actively involved in children's ministry. Yes, children can witness for Jesus! Let's nurture this spirit in the little ones so they can testify for Jesus.

Let's Pray, Jesus Loves You

My 2-year-old son, Nathaniel, and I were waiting in the lobby of our apartment building for my husband to park the car after an afternoon of grocery shopping. While we were waiting, my son started singing different children's sing-along songs. One of our neighbours from the second floor came out of her apartment. I said hello to her as she walked by. Nathaniel stopped singing to say hi to the neighbour, also. She responded, and as she tried to converse with me, Nathaniel said, "Let's pray." She looked at him in amazement and asked me how old he was. I replied, and as she walked back down the hall he resumed singing "Jesus loves me, this I know."

Then he called out, "Let's pray; Jesus loves you," and ran up the three little steps on all fours, then ran down the hallway behind her, saying "Jesus loves you; let's pray" I realized that I'd better do something before he upset the neighbour, so I called him to come back. He stopped, turned around, and said, "Mummy, I'm in the Lord's army. OK?" With tears in my eyes I stared at him for a moment, realizing he had just witnessed to this neighbour.

Yausse! Abreu's Miracle!

Her beautiful voice fills the entire chapel. Her face exhibits peace and hope as she sings of Jesus' love. Yes, God is the Rock of her life! God is her salvation! For twelve-year-old Yausse! Abreu of El Cerro Adventist Church in Cuba, being able to sing and witness for Jesus is a living miracle.

Yausse! suffered a rare disease called Periarthritis Nodosa which is a serious blood vessel disease where small and medium-sized arteries are abnormally inflamed and become swollen. She spent days and months in and out of hospital. At times life seemed so difficult and unbearable for this little child. But the pains and aches did not deter her from getting involved in church activities.

"Whenever I feel better, I accompany my Mama and Hermana (elder sister) to My Story Hour," beamed Yausse!. "I like this weekly Bible study group in my home town, Matanzas."

But not long afterwards Yausse!'s health deteriorated and her family had to move her to a better hospital in the capital city of Havana. Her stay in the hospital went from a days to weeks to months. It seems a pity for a child to suffer so much and never really enjoy a regular childhood. Is life really fair?

"I love people, but I can't touch them at all," sighed Yausse!. To pass her time, Mrs. Abreu decided to help find some children to come to the house to study the Bible with Yausse! whose desire was to be a Bible worker. It was amazing that a children's study group was begun very quickly. Yausse! called it My Story Hour! She led out in the programme, teaching the children to sing and to study the Scriptures about Jesus and His love. Pretty soon a

Branch Sabbath School was established and more and more children flocked to her house. Up to date, twenty children have graduated from My Story Hour, and have gone on to join the Voice of Prophecy studies. A Vacation Bible School was organized with 106 children in attendance. Two girls were baptized together with the parents of one of them.

Today if you meet Yaussel, she is a walking miracle! Praise God for the miracle of healing! She walks about like a normal child. She sings and praises the Lord with her beautiful voice. She holds concerts in various churches, sharing her testimony of the goodness of our heavenly Father.

Internet evangelism

Are you involved in Skype, MSN, blogs, MySpace, Facebook and You Tube, iPod? Thousands of children and youth are using these communication tools. Indeed, in this postmodern era, the Internet is a great part of children's natural environment. Most children around the world have access to the Internet at school and/or home. In a 2005 survey of 10,000 students aged 12 to 24, from 16 countries, Ipsos-Reid Group found Internet to be widely available to Swedish and Canadian students. 78 percent of students in Sweden and 74 percent in Canada are able to go online at school. 80 percent of Swedish children and 71 percent of Canadian students have web access at home. Taiwan ranked third, with 63 percent accessibility at school, followed by the UK, US, Netherlands, Australia, South Korea, Mexico, Japan, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Brazil, and Urban China.

Amazingly, even many preschool children are capable of going online to play games, Skype their friends, or watch DVDs. In fact, some children spend a great part of their time on the computer. There is no doubt that the Internet offers children many opportunities for learning, constructive entertainment, and personal growth. And they are here to stay! So why not utilise this powerful tool to reach children for Christ? Thousands of children have not heard of Jesus and His gospel. Why not use the Internet to share the Gospel with a spiritually desperate world.

Internet Evangelism should be one of the innovative ways of reaching children and youth today. Our church needs to get on board to launch websites to share Christ with children and youth, and to nurture the faith of our own Adventist children. At the recent GIEN (Global Internet Evangelism Network) Convention in Denver, July 9-13, 2008, a panel discussion made up of children and youth provided valuable insights and ideas on what types of information and materials could be helpful to reach our millennial kids.

Children's leaders need to join hands and collaborate with other leaders to evangelise children and youth through the Internet. If they love war games, get them on board for Bible games and fun puzzles. Provide interactive Bible studies and discussions of important life topics which can help children grow in faith. The time is ripe for us to maximise the opportunity to share Jesus through Internet Evangelism. Watch out for the launching of a new initiative for children and youth!