

# CHILDREN'S LEADER

S U M M E R

2 0 0 3

A NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO LEAD CHILDREN IN THE CONGREGATION.

subscribe free online at [www.childmin.com](http://www.childmin.com)

2 Summer Outreach  
in Review

VBS 2 Photos

Incredible  
Answered Prayer 2

4 Meeting Needs  
In Our Community

News & 4 Notes

Vol. 10, No. 3  
Editor: Sharon Wright  
Children's Ministries Director:  
Noelene Johnsson

A publication of the  
North American Division  
Children's Ministries Department  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600  
(301) 680-6425  
[www.childmin.com](http://www.childmin.com)

## Preparing a GraceLink Sabbath School

*At this time of year, many new leaders take up their Sabbath School responsibilities, some having no prior training with the GraceLink materials. If this is your situation, the following personal experience may be helpful, whatever age level you teach.*

**It's about that time! As a first-time primary leader, I dig out my Leader/Teacher Guide and begin preparing to teach.**

I see that this lesson, Lesson 9, is about the temptation of Jesus. First, I glance through the lesson objectives. At the end of Sabbath School, I want the children to know that resisting temptation is an act of worship. Wow! I'd never thought of worship quite like that. When I choose to do what I know God wants me to, I am acknowledging His sovereignty and offering worship. If I give in and do what He doesn't want me to, I am worshipping another god, be it Satan or my own appetite. A new and different way of looking at the story—I'm excited about this lesson already!

The second objective says that the children should feel a need to follow Jesus' example by calling on God for help. This is important; if they don't feel that this lesson is something that they need, it's just water off a duck's back. And in helping them respond by praising God for help in overcoming sin and temptation, I am completing the cycle necessary for decision-making. These three objectives represent how I will judge the success of this lesson, not whether the kids can accurately spit back the facts of the story.

I scan through the rest of the program. Choosing a **Readiness Activity** is important for the imaginative Style 1 learners in my class, who want to know, "Why do I need this?" I think I'll go for Option A, "Simon Says." Starting with something fun and active makes a big difference. Sarah knows that if she comes in late, she runs the risk of missing more than just singing a few songs!

Speaking of song service, I think we'll have it at the end of our program this week. I like the thought of ending with "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." We'll do the mission story and offering after we play "Simon Says." And that neat prayer time idea will be great after the lesson story.

Now we get to **The Bible Lesson**. This is the part that the Style 2 learners, the logical ones, have been waiting for: the facts. Using the suggested hand motions will provide a connection to our readiness activity. I think I'll ask two of my teen helpers to act out the story while I read. I won't have any trouble coming up with props for them to use. I'll just have to remember to read slowly enough that the children can keep up with the hand motions.

The Bible Study section involves reading some Scripture passages and answering three printed questions. Since we'll do this in small groups with teen or adult helpers, it won't be a problem at all for the first- and second-graders who don't read well. The confident readers—or helpers—can read the texts and questions. Everyone will be included in answering them. If I have less than ten children in class this Sabbath, it will be easy enough to do this as one group.

**Applying the Lesson** is what children like Julio have been waiting for. He's a common sense Style 3 learner who wants to know, "How can I make this work for me?" I like Option B,

(continued on page 4)

# Summer Outreach in Review

*Editor's Note: As of August 18, we've had 229 VBS programs reported—and received pictures from 24 of them. (Check out our complete photo gallery online at [www.childmin.com/VBS](http://www.childmin.com/VBS).) Total children involved so far, 10,350. All 2003 VBS reports are due by October 1.*

The teens were incredible! They designed and drew the invitations; we ran off about a thousand of them and had church members deliver them to the community. The teens also painted the backdrop and helped tremendously.

We are going to try to start a children's combination story hour and choir/drama combination, and notify all those that attended. We'd also like to have the teens help direct this effort, as the kids really seemed to relate well to them.

~Kelowna, BC

This was the best VBS we have ever had. The whole program was awesome!

~Garland, TX



*Dive-In Diner, Cowpens, NC*



*"Elijah" prepares his altar (above), and Jonah makes a choice (left) in New Hope Church, Laurel, MD*



During our Friday evening closing program, we asked the children if they wanted to give their hearts to Jesus and say a prayer with us. Most of the children responded and gave their hearts to Jesus.

~Hillsboro, OR

We gave the HMS Richards study Bible for children as a graduation gift. It has excellent references to most all our church beliefs. They are also inexpensive. We will pray that with these Bibles in their hands, the Holy Spirit will impress upon them and their families to open and study.

~Taylorsville, MS

We covered part of the hallway with black plastic, added fish made out of fluorescent paper and glow-in-the-dark paint, and shone black lights on them. The kids thought it was really neat.

~Jamestown, ND



We had 2 boys who do not attend church come to our VBS. The first day they complained that they didn't want to come back. On the third

*Outdoor games in Kelowna, BC (below), and a fun snack at 54th St. Church—Los Angeles, CA (right)*



day, they finally relaxed and started enjoying themselves. Then all we heard was, 'I don't ever want to go home!' They loved it!

~Laurel, MS

One lady who had just moved to town saw our ad in the paper. The first night, she walked clear across town with her 3 children to attend. We were able to provide transportation for her and she is coming to our Sabbath morning program and has enrolled her children in Adventurers and Pathfinders.

~Hillsboro, OH

My daughter is 4 years old. She loves to play with her SCUBA dive buddies and knows all the Bible points by memory and which dive buddy they go with and the Bible story that goes with each Bible point.

~Spartanburg, SC

We had about half church members, and half community kids—we were very blessed. One family started coming back to church as a result of their involvement with VBS. Praise the Lord for how He works!

~Crossville, TN



Smiling faces in Kingston, PA

The next to the last night of our VBS, I talked to the children about Jesus' death and resurrection. I told them that Jesus is in heaven right now, then I asked how many want to be with Jesus. Every child raised their hand. A little later, a boy piped up, "You know what? We could have VBS in heaven!"

I replied, "When we get there, look me up and we'll do just that." This was our first VBS, but it won't be the last.

~Hillcrest, PA

*Editor's Note: Dianne Wandsell, who shared the story above, conducted four separate SCUBA programs within the Hillcrest/Blossburg district—for a total of 112 children, 84 of them non-Adventist.*

Our storyteller Ezekiel got a child's wading pool and put real fish in it. The children loved his station every night. The children couldn't wait to come to VBS. We had a puppet show at the end and the children really liked that.

~Lake Placid, FL



Wilmington, NC group in front of their storytime tent

Six local Adventist churches combined to run Vacation Bible School.  
~Nunwading, Victoria (Australia)



A creative backdrop in Auberry, CA

Children in costume reenact the Bible story, Conklin, MI



Preschool Tidepool, New Hope Church, Laurel MD

One New Hope visitor enjoys her craft time

We have one boy who just started attending church shortly before VBS. He kept telling his mother that church was boring, and so forth. (He's about 10 years old.) She talked him into coming to VBS for about an hour the first night. When she told him it was time to go, he begged her to let him stay and came back every night. He said it was more fun than playing video games.

~Byhalia, MS



## Incredible Answered Prayer

During our SCUBA program, the children brought socks as an offering to help underprivileged children. Each church is given the option to support a local need or send the socks to a designated mission field.

We have a puppet ministry at Kuna called "Hands 4 Him." This ministry was created for City Light, a homeless shelter for women and children in Boise. We meet there once a month to care for the children while their moms attend a class.

After the VBS program ended, I felt impressed to give the socks to City Light. On July 14, I stopped by to see if they had a need. I told the director and an

associate about our VBS program and mentioned that the children had collected socks as a mission project. When I mentioned having socks to donate, you should have seen their faces light up. Their mouths just dropped open and their hands froze when I handed them the box. They had been praying for socks!

When things happen so perfectly, you just have to know there is a God in control. When the children hear about this, they will be encouraged that God hears their prayers—and that He may even use them to answer another child's prayer.

~Marilyn Jones  
Kuna, ID

## Meeting Needs in Our Community

Recently, our church has experienced a sense of revival and a burden for community outreach. This year's summer outreach program was called "Sharing, Caring and Fun."

We wanted to provide fun, Christ-centered summer activities for our Adventist teens, and reach out to women and children in the Japanese expatriate community in our area, reinforcing their ability to understand English within a Christian context.

35 children and 13 adult participants registered for our program. Most of these were Japanese mothers and children with no concept of the Christian worldview. These families are not permanent residents; their husbands were sent here by their employers for work experience. They normally leave after a couple of years and new people come to take their place.

The mothers are often alone and bored and don't get around much because of the language barrier. Differences in their husbands' status may keep them from even interacting

with one another. The Japanese children go to regular schools and make friends. On Saturdays they attend the local Japanese school so they can adapt easily when they return to Japan.

Our Adventist teens mixed well with the group and helped the visitors understand what to do, especially during the crafts time and the fellowship meal. We heard comments like, "I haven't had many friends here, so it was a wonderful four days for my children and me."

Our plans for follow-up include bringing Japanese mothers and their children to Sabbath School, offering a healthy cooking class, inviting our new friends to share their musical talents with our church, and teaching English while giving Bible studies

Ordinarily, it takes five or more years for a

Japanese person to convert to Christianity, let alone the Adventist Church. In fact, it is not uncommon for Japanese to wait more than 10

years before deciding to join the church. When we consider their short stay in our country, we see the urgent need to reach these families while they are here.

One of our church members had been working with the Japanese families already. This really helped the program to succeed. We are encouraging the entire church body to work within their circles of influence outside of

the church. This kind of ministry has great potential.

~Glenn Whitt  
Farmington Hills, MI



## News & Notes

### Growing A Family of Grace

Mark it on your calendar—**October 16-19, Portland, OR.** Details online at <http://adventistleadershipconvention.com>.

### Open Hearts, Open Hands

The Children's Sabbath 2004 materials are now available online. Download your free program guide from <http://childmin.com>, or call *AdventSource* to order (800-328-0525; \$2 shipping charge).

### Telling the Story of Jesus

We have a supply of *Mission Awareness* magazines, "Telling the Story of Jesus" left over from camp meetings. This magazine is particularly of interest to primary Sabbath School leaders; it offers a 2-page color spread of flags of every country. Contact NAD Children's Ministries, 301-680-6425, or e-mail [ChildrensMinistries@nad.adventist.org](mailto:ChildrensMinistries@nad.adventist.org).

### Lava Lava Island

If you enjoyed SCUBA, you'll love Lava Lava Island—it's the hottest VBS around! Preview next year's VBS program today at <http://childmin.com/VBS>. You can even pre-order the starter kit online.

(continued from page 1)

because it presents a real situation that Julio can relate to—and it doesn't require any additional materials.

**Debriefing** is my favorite part of each activity. That's when I get the children's feedback, check that the objectives are being met and reinforce the day's message. If I ask the right questions, the children will usually make the point for me!

I read in *Children's Ministry Magazine* that the most common mistake teachers make is talking too much. Most teachers wait less than two seconds for children to respond before they go on talking! I don't have to be afraid of silence. It means that brains are working.

That same article also said that publishers are often to blame for teachers' tendency to revert to lecture. I'm glad the GraceLink materials aren't like that. They limit teacher talk to giving directions and asking questions during debriefing. And they always provide suggestions for ways to teach the lesson besides having the kids just sit there while I read it out loud.

**Sharing the Lesson** finishes up the formal part of the program. Sanguine youngsters like Dimitri, a dynamic Style 4 learner, look forward to this part; it gives them something to show others after class. Since I have several first-graders in my group, I'll print out some shortened Bible promises for them to copy.

After we've repeated this week's message at the conclusion of each section of the program

and emphasized it in discussion, the kids will have a ready answer to the question, "What was your Sabbath School about today?"

I like to plan a short review of last week's lesson at the end of the program. It gives the children a chance to switch gears and share what they did on their own. Since the lessons aren't tied to chronological order, it's not necessary to do this before teaching the new lesson.

When the children leave Sabbath School, they have been introduced to a story that they can practice applying all week as they study this lesson some more.

I like this so much better than the old method of having students study the lesson ahead of time. With the old method, the only way to practice application was to do it at the same time you're studying a new, completely different lesson! Before we switched to GraceLink, some kids would come to Sabbath School having already decided that the lesson was "Boring!" Now I get a chance to start the lesson off with a new and exciting focus.

A lot of people still don't realize the extent of the changes that the GraceLink program has brought, such as changing age-level groupings (see <http://gracelink.net>, FAQs), or focusing the whole Sabbath School time around the message. As an elementary teacher, I recognize that these changes are based on sound educational theory—and they make life more interesting for adults, too!

~Sharon Wright