

GOD'S PLANS FOR HIS PEOPLE

MEMORY VERSE FOR THIS UNIT

"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God" (Psalm 143:10a, NIV*).

OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT

This unit will help the children:• Seek God's direction. • Feel reverence for the power of God • Understand the care and patience that the Lord has for them. Learn to obey God in everything in order to live correctly.

THE REASON WE TEACH THIS UNIT

Please allow adequate time as you prepare for each of your sessions. Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI) desires these children's discipleship lessons to both engage the teacher in personal discipleship as well as to be children's disciple makers. At this early elementary age, your children are discovering situations unknown to them previously. On occasion they will face a difficult problem and feel that God is not working in their lives. They may believe that being small means they cannot do anything.

Through the lessons in this unit they will learn that we are all precious in the sight of God, regardless of age. They will also realize that the Lord is working in them NOW so they can learn from his Word while they are small.

They will learn that "obedience" and "availability" are needed to serve God; and God gives them grace and wisdom so they can obey and always be ready.

Availability is the desire to serve God. Moses is an example of a man who felt inadequate to the task to which God called him. At first he did not want to obey the command the Lord was giving him, to appear before Pharaoh and intercede for the freedom of his people.

However, God did not give up. Moses became a great leader who trusted fully in God, and through obedience, achieved true greatness. The Lord used him despite his lack of confidence and weakness.

Likewise, God can use children; no one is inefficient in God's hands, and children are no exception; they must feel that they are an important part of God's plan and know that they can depend on His help as they follow Him.

They will also learn that when they are in dangerous situations they can come to God with confidence, knowing that he is always willing to help them.

In the "Evangelism and the Teaching of Children" section of New Testament Evangelism Today, we learn some characteristics the concerned teacher should look for in six-, seven- and eight-year-olds.

What do teachers of primaries (six-, seven-, and eight-year old children) need to know about emotional development? The early

primary is apt to be given to extremes in emotional behavior. Smiles turn quickly to tears, hatred to love. Thus one's life is filled with inconsistencies.

About the age of seven the primary may experience a stage of withdrawal. Seven-year olds may seem to live within themselves. Daydreaming, absentmindedness, and procrastination are typical traits.

Middle primary aged children are hero worshippers. Unless the Christian teacher effectively uses biographies of spiritual heroes, the children may select unworthy persons as their ideal.

To the late primary, belonging to a club, collecting "things," and avoiding the opposite sex grow in importance.

What can primary children understand about salvation?

During the primary years children should learn about the Trinity and God's redemptive purpose. If possible they should have their own Bibles. At eight they can begin to study it on their own initiative. Bible teaching helps the primary form proper concepts of honesty, fair play, and right and wrong.

Primary aged children can clearly sense their need for repentance and forgiveness. At this time in life most children under Christian teaching develop the capacity to know Christ personally, and many are saved. Because of their growing desire for belonging to groups and clubs, the Sunday school class, Junior Fellowship, and church membership class are meaningful experiences.

At what age should a teacher try to bring about the conversion of the child?

Age is not the only factor. When children reach in their development what Gaines S. Dobbins, in his book *Winning the Children*, calls "the level of choice-consciousness," they can be led to Christ. There are four developmental levels of consciousness. These include:

(1) Self-consciousness occurs during the first few months of life. The infant senses himself a being apart from others. At this stage he is primarily concerned with himself.(2) The second level, God-consciousness, soon follows. Now the child wants to know where the animals, trees, stars, and insects came from. She is especially concerned about where she came from. The answer to most of her questions is God.(3) Sin-consciousness develops as the child finds himself in conflict with God.(4) Soon the child realizes that she has the power to choose good or bad, falsehood or truth, revenge or forgiveness. This is choice-consciousness. Now she is ready for Christian conversion.