

t_{he} Chalkboard

A Quarterly Publication of Children's Ministries
Zion Assembly Church of God



For Future Generations

Children love to ask questions. They are very inquisitive by nature. As they ask questions, they gain new information and understanding. A Bible lesson can actually develop out of a point of interest or a question raised by a child. These moments of inquiry are called "Teachable Moments." This question-answer process gives parents and teachers insight into the child's perspective. We must seize these opportunities to tell children of the power and love of God while they are interested. Clearly, God created our brains with such thinking and learning patterns.

For this reason, He instructed Joshua to create a learning situation for future generations. The Lord gave very specific instructions. He told Joshua to choose one man from each of the twelve tribes. Each man was to collect one stone from the middle of the Jordan River. The stones were to come from the exact place where the priest's feet stood while they held the Ark of the Covenant. This was the very spot where the waters of the Jordan River where dried up so the Israelites could cross on dry ground. When the Israelites reached a resting place for the night, they were to build a memorial. Joshua did exactly as God told him. The men collected the stones, carried them over, and Joshua constructed the monument at Gilgal. Why go to all this trouble? It was for the children's sake. God wanted future generations to see this memorial and inquire of its original meaning. He was thinking of those in the future, who were not present to witness this miraculous event or experience His power in this way. This monument would "be a sign in times to come" (Joshua 4:6). God knew when children would see the stone memorial they would naturally ask, "What do these stones mean?" Therefore, the Lord told the Israelites to be prepared with an answer. He said, "When your children ask . . . then ye shall answer them" (4:6-7). The people were instructed to tell their children how they crossed the Jordan River on dry land. This miracle was to be rehearsed to each generation so they would "know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty" and so they would learn to "fear the Lord" (4:24).

Likewise, it is our responsibility to answer children's

questions. How else will they come to know the Lord? As parents, teachers, and pastors, let us take advantage of the impromptu lessons in our children's lives. May we never be too busy with our own plans and preparations, as to not take the time "to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (Psalm 145:12).



Ideas to Illuminate

The story of Joshua and the Israelites crossing the Jordan River can be taught to children in a variety of ways. After telling or acting out the story from Joshua chapter four, take the students outside and instruct each child to find a stone. Reassemble as a group and allow each child to explain one great thing God has done in his/her life. Pile the stones in the center of the group and pray together thanking God for His wonderful works. Another idea is to make edible memorials out of marshmallows and frosting. As each marshmallow is "glued" together, allow the students to share something special God has done. Finally, you may choose to make homemade memory stones. This activity would be the most involved and require added adult supervision but would produce a lasting memento. Purchase a large bag of quick-drying cement. After mixing according to the directions, pour the wet cement into shallow cardboard boxes. Have each child press their hand or foot into the mixture to make an impression. Students can carve their name on it with a craft stick or decorate with other small items such as pebbles or sea shells. The finished product would be a great gift for parents or grandparents. For detailed instructions see: www.homemadesimple.com or www.ehow.com.

Chalk Talk:

Let's Talk! I want to hear how you have implemented this or any other newsletter idea into your children's ministries. Please send me an e-mail to the address at the bottom of this page.

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