

## **Fellowship Concerning the Children**

(Given in Long Beach Ca. 1/28/79 by Gene Gruhler)

Exodus 2:7-10 - Judges 13:2-5, 8,9,11-14 - I Samuel 1:22-24, 27-28

Acts 2:38-39 – I Corinthians 7:14 - II Timothy 1:5 3:14-15

There are a few things we need to be very clear about concerning the children. The verses we read in Acts 2 and I Corinthians 7 set forth two basic fundamental principles that must underlie all of our dealing with our children. First, the promise of the full salvation of the Lord is to our children. We need to see that when Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost, of course the context is broader than that, but tucked in there he said repent, believe and be baptized and you'll receive the Holy Spirit, "for the promise is to you and to your children." We need to realize the fact that we are the believing ones. The fact that we are the ones who have received God's salvation means that our children are also included in the promise of this salvation.

We must realize that our children are not the same as other children. Our children are different. Our children are born under a promise. Our children are children of promise. The promise is that they will be saved, that they will repent, that they'll be baptized, that they'll be brought into God's full salvation. This is the promise of God. In our believing we also get this promise for our children. So the first thing I'd like to encourage you and maybe stir you up a little bit is we need to believe the promise. We need to believe the promise for every one of our children. Whether it looks promising or it doesn't look promising. Right? We still need to believe the promise. This promise is the promise of God to us. Why? We are the believing ones: we have repented, we've believed, we've been baptized, we've received the Spirit and have been brought into God's full salvation in the church and this promise is to us and to our children.

So, first of all we have to believe for our children. We have to believe the promise over our children. We have to believe this promise is for them. The promise -- what? Of God's full salvation! We have to begin with this. We have to begin with a believing heart. If we don't believe this promise surely we won't get it. This is the principle of faith. It's according to your faith you'll receive. Now this is not faith based upon speculation, but this is our faith and the exercise of our faith based upon the word of God. "The promise is to you and to your children." I underlined this in red in my Bible. As a parent, I have to believe this promise. No matter what, still this is the word of God. I don't care about the environment. I don't care about the circumstances. I don't care about whether this child looks promising or doesn't. I believe this word.

As a brother in the church involved with the children, I also believe this word for all the church children; for all the children of all the parents in the church. Whether his parents believe or not, anyway, I believe for this child; whether that parent has become discouraged and given up on this child or not. I would never give up because of the word of God. The promise is to this child, to my children and to your children, to all the children of those who have believed and who are in the church. We need to exercise ourselves in faith over the promise; we need to take the promise. The promise is to you and to your children. The promise of salvation is for every one of these children.

Second, to strengthen that, we need to see in I Corinthians 7:14 there is a principle that the children are sanctified by the very fact they belong to us. They are not unclean but they are holy. The principle here is that if there is a believing wife and an unbelieving husband, that unbelieving husband is sanctified in the believing wife. If there is a believing husband and an unbelieving wife, the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband. And then Paul goes and adds this word, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." They are not dispositionally sanctified but they are positioned to be saved. They are positionally sanctified. We have to realize that just by a relationship with us something happens to someone. In other words if I am a believing husband and have an unbelieving wife, by the fact that she is my wife and I have now believed, she is sanctified. There is something different with her. She may not know it. But God knows, and the angels now know - that this one has been set apart. This unbelieving one has been set apart. That's why we encourage the saints with unbelieving spouses; don't separate from them if possible. If they are willing to go along in the marriage relationship, it's better because they are sanctified in that relationship. You see? Well, the principle also applies with the children according to Paul, according to the word, right? Otherwise your children are unclean but now are they holy. Even one believing parent produces holy children. Even one believing parent means that the children in this marriage, in this family are holy. They are not common; they are not the same as the worldly children.

I tell you, when we got into this whole thing of children's meeting several months ago, this was the first thing that impressed us very much - these two points. Our children are different. We're not dealing with them like going to the unbelievers and trying to get them saved. No, we are not. We are starting off with 1. the promise and 2. the position. Half the job is done. The promise for these kids and the position is theirs already by virtue of the fact that they have been brought into the world by you, a believing parent. So half the job is done. They are half saved already. Right? They are half saved already because the promise is for them and position is theirs. They are half way there. I tell you it is a lot easier to bring our children to the Lord than it is to go to the unbelievers. You know, it's a lot easier. We don't want to let them get away from this relationship. We don't want to let them get out of this sanctified position into the world and then have to recover them some day in the future. No, no! We have to believe the word. We have to believe that the promise is to them and the position is for them. We have to believe over all of our children. And this believing is an exercise of faith. 2 Timothy 1:5 says, the unfeigned faith that is in you, Timothy, dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and then in your mother Eunice, and now I see that same faith is in you. We need to see in this verse that there can be a transmission of faith in the families of the believing ones. Now we can't believe for them, that's not what I am saying. I think you know that. But there can be a transmission of faith from generation to generation. There can be a spiritual heredity passed on from one generation to another generation. That's why it all begins with us.

So, if we came today to find out what to do in children's meeting, I'm not going to tell you. I'm going to tell you first you need to exercise your faith to believe the promise, to believe the position and to transmit this faith to the children from generation to generation.

Now it doesn't say Timothy, once your grandmother believed and then your mother believed and now I found out you believed too and that's very good. No! It says, the faith that's in you today dwelt first in your grandmother. That faith which is in you today was first in your grandmother Lois, then that faith was passed to your mother Eunice, and now it's in you. You see this? It makes a big difference to say that your grandmother was a believer and your mother and you too are a believer. Or, there is a faith, there is something in you today, which was first in your grandmother, then it got passed to your mother, and now it's in you today. In other words what's in you today has been passed along to you.

This exercise of faith on our part as parents is crucial. It's this, which will come to our children. What was in Timothy had been passed on to him. In all the verses we read, this verse and those in the Old Testament, we see very clearly that it has mostly to do with the mothers. We'll come back to this. But let me point this out. It's from the grandmother, to the mother, to the son. And in the case of Moses, it's his mother who was given the charge of him as an infant — right? - on behalf of Pharaoh's daughter. Then in the case of Manoah, he wanted to know how shall we bring the children up and the angel of the Lord said, let her do what I told her to do, Samuel's mother prayed to the Lord and she got a son and she had the burden to bring him up a certain way and her husband said fine, whatever you do is fine with me. She did the right thing and he served and ministered in the house of the Lord.

So anyway, without getting sidetracked, we need to see something. There needs to be an exercise on the part of all of us — brothers and sisters alike, fathers and mothers alike. Manoah is a good example. He was exercised how to bring the child up. But actually, the greatest influence on the children is with the mothers. According to the word of God and according to our experience this is a fact.

So first of all the main thing we need to see is that our children are not the same as other children. They are not the same; they are born under a promise; they are born in a position, and they are born in a place where faith can be passed on to them. We by the exercise of our faith over them can bring them into the reality of the same faith that's in us. That faith which dwelt in our parents, perhaps or maybe it begins with us, maybe we're the first generation, but anyway, we may be the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. In my case, at least, I am at least the 3rd generation. My grandfather was a believing man. And that faith went to my father and that faith came to me, and the faith that's in me today dwelt first in my grandfather and then my father. And then on the other side it was in my grandmother, my mother's mother and it was in my mother, and then it was in me. Anyway, there is a transmission of faith. To me it's a very real thing. I can testify in some points, things that were in my grandfather are now in me. I realize today what I didn't realize in my youth. Some specific things in me came from my grandfather concerning his faith and his walk with God. Today there are certain things, which I realize got passed from him to my father, to me. This is very real.

So, first brothers and sisters we need to exercise ourselves. We need to exercise to believe that all of these children have a promise, a promise of God's full salvation. They have a position; they are holy; they are set apart already; they are half way there. And then we as the parents need to exercise our faith and pass on and infuse this faith into them.

In 2 Timothy 3, we saw Paul admonishing Timothy to continue in the things which he had learned, then he said, "and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." So here we have the way in which Timothy was brought up, that is he was brought up in the Holy Scriptures; but not according to our natural concept or not in the Christianity way. The Christianity way is to start with the very small children, start to teach them all you can about the Bible. Right? Teach them all the stories, all the things, year after year. This is the way I was brought up. In the typical Christianity way I won almost every contest for memorizing and Bible knowledge. All the things just got poured into me and poured into me. And I was a little bit interested, so I also read a lot of books. By the time I was a teenager I had heard everything, read everything and nothing impressed me anymore. I tell you in my teenage years I could hardly hear any speaker that impressed me. I read so much, I knew so much. I had a lot of premature knowledge that dulled my sensitivity. So that's not what we're talking about. On the other hand, one day when the Lord comes in, out of all that, something happens. But our point here is, we need to see that in order to bring the children into the right way, we need the scriptures that are able to make them wise unto salvation. From a child Timothy knew the scriptures, not in the way of the Jews, in all their dividing the fine points, that's not what his mother and grandmother did for him. They didn't teach him the law in all the fine points and in all the hair-splitting and in all the arguments of the Rabbis' and of all their schools of opinions. That's not the knowledge he got of the scriptures. He got, the scriptures that were able to make him wise unto salvation.

So, our handling of the word of God with the children has to be according to this principle. That is, we will give them the scriptures, not for the sake of knowing the scriptures, but in order to make them wise unto salvation. In other words, we will measure out to them from the word of God according to where they are and what will help to make them wise unto salvation.

In our consideration in these weeks, we saw that the goal of all our dealing with the children from the time before they're born all the way up to the pre-school and the school-age years, is to bring them to salvation. We have a definite clear-cut goal, and our goal is that every child in the church in Anaheim will be saved before they go to junior high, will be saved by the time they're 12 years old. Every one will be saved according to the word. We have the promise, we have the position, we have the faith as parents, we have the scriptures to make them wise unto salvation. Our work with them is with this goal in view: that none of our children should be lost to the world, but every one of them should be made wise unto salvation and added to the church. But not in the Christianity way of getting them to believe or raise their hand or kneel down or stand on the chair and call "Oh Lord Jesus." No, no, not in that way at all. This is why we realize that we have 12 years to do this job, so we're going to relax. We're not going to get uptight. We're not going to worry. We're going to do a kind of diligent farming work. We're going to begin before they're born and when they're 1 year, and 2 years and 3 years old and every year, we have a plan for our children. At every age level we have a plan, a definite plan. But the plan for every age level is working toward this goal -- not one of them will get to junior high without being definitely saved. I believe 12 years from now every child in the church in Anaheim will be saved by the time they're 12 years old. Those that are already 12, anyway we'll do the best we can this year. Those that are 11 we have a year to work on. Those that are 10 we have 2 years. Those that are 6 we have 6 years. Those that are just being born, hallelujah, they're already saved. They're surely going to be saved. Why? Because the word gives the promise to them and the position for them. We have the faith to believe the word, and we have the example of the scriptures, and we have the Holy Scriptures to make them wise unto salvation. So we have all that we need.

With this kind of vision and this kind of burden, they're all going to be saved. You believe me. I can testify that we have some experience in this way. By caring for the children in this way, we have seen over a number of years in New York as crop after crop has come through junior high, we don't need to lose any if the ones dealing with the children have a real heart, a real burden. Actually we wouldn't let any high schoolers or college students deal with the children alone. We would get the most experienced parents to deal with the youngest children. All the more experienced sisters cared for the pre-school children. We saw them come along year after year. You believe me, this works. This kind of care will produce a crop. If it doesn't produce a crop this year it will next year. If it doesn't next year it will the year after. But believe me, we have 12 years and eventually we're going to get this crop. We're going to get every one of them. We saw year after year, we saw kids coming through junior high, coming through high school that came out of the children's meeting. None of the ones who came through the children's meeting, for at least a couple of years got lost to the world. All the ones we had for at least a couple of years in the children's meeting, when they got to junior high, made it through. Some of you know Don Rademacher. I had him about 15 years ago or more. I was out of college and if I remember right, he was in junior high. Out of that crop Don's the only one who eventually got caught. So in those days we weren't clear. But over the years, you see, we began to realize that the proper care of the children is the most vital and healthy thing in the church life. We shouldn't have to be worried year after year about rescuing our children back from the world. This should be a normal thing. They just should progress in a normal, proper way. Not in a Christianity way, we're not doing Sunday school work; we're caring for our children.

This is not the church's burden. This is our burden as parents. We can't pass that burden over to the church. No! We bear the burden before the Lord. And any others who aren't parents who would like to bear the burden with us, they can bear with us. But fundamentally, the burden belongs to the parents. And as parents we all need to learn to exercise our faith. Whether we're capable or incapable we need to learn how to bring up the children in this way. We can because together we can do it. What I am short in, Steve will make up. What Steve's short in, Dick will make up, etc. In other words, here we are all together in the church life. There is some point I come to with my child some day for example, when I say to the brothers, "Brothers, you have to help. I just can't get through on this point with this child so you help me and I'll help take care of your child." Anyway, together in the church we can bear the responsibility. This is an important concept. The church doesn't bear the burden. No! The church will not take the burden from you as parents. No! But the church will help you as parents. And as parents we will bear the burden together. As parents in the church we'll bear the burden together, so that all these children can come to a saving experience of the Lord in a genuine way, in the way of life. Not just in the way of raising their hand or making a decision, but in a way of life over a period of years.

These are the fundamental things. And in the verses we read in the Old Testament, we just would stress the importance of the pre-school years, in fact from the time they're born. In Judges 13, we have a wonderful example of Manoah, the father of Samson. And Manoah was a man whose wife was barren and the angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "you're going to have a son and he will be a Nazarite from his birth, if you restrain from wine and strong drink and anything defiling", and then the angel left. And Manoah's wife went and told him. Manoah said "did you ask the angel how can we bring such a child up?" And she said, "no." He said, if the angel comes again let me know, we need to find out. We better find out. This is good.

Before the child is hardly conceived, there's an exercise how to bring this child up. We all need to be so desperate. We're too confident or we're too lazy; one or the other. We all think that having children is just kind of natural. Right? It's not so natural in that sense. In other words, we need an exercise. Manoah's exercise is the outstanding example of a proper heart towards the Lord over the children. This was on the part of a father in this case. The angel of the Lord came again and appeared to her, and quickly she called her husband. Manoah came and said to the angel, "How shall we order the life of this child to bring him up to fulfill your words"? The angel's word is very interesting. He said, "Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware". The name of the wife is not even mentioned). "She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe." This was his instruction on how to bring this child up. This is very instructive. The way to bring up children is to take care of ourselves with the Lord. It is to take care of your life with the Lord, to keep from any defiling thing coming into us. This is the way to bring up children. In the Bible it is very hard to find a way to bring up children. There are some things in Proverbs and so on, principles, but basically it is very hard. Why? Because every culture has a different way. If we try to have some fellowship this afternoon on how to bring up children, we will be here until the Millennium with all our different concepts. So forget about that. In a certain sense, any way is all right as long as it is according to this principle in Judges 13. Let nothing defiling come into you. You be careful of what you eat. You be careful of what you take in. You be careful what you touch. In other words, if we maintain the Nazarite's vow, our children will be Nazarites. If we maintain our consecration with a full separation to the Lord, our children will be such. This is the instruction of the angel of the Lord to the parents of Samson. They fulfilled such a word, and they brought him forth, and the Spirit came. Of course with Samson, something happened later on, but that is another matter.

The principle we need to see in Judges 13 is very crucial. It is that the exercise over the children begins before they are born. You see, we often think that the pre-school is a kind of nursery, a babysitting. We just get the 12 and 13-year-old girls to look after them so that the mothers can go to the meeting. In principle, this is not right. I would say the first 3 or 5 years are the most crucial according to these three matters. According to the example of Judges 13, Exodus 2 and I Samuel 1. Why? Because you must realize that Moses' mother only had Moses for not more than 5 years and probably about 3 years. Pharaoh's daughter said, "Hire her to be the nurse". That means to breast feed the child, to nurse him for her. To nurse the child until he could be weaned. The time of going to Pharaoh's daughter was probably shortly after the weaning time, which in those days was probably about 3 years of age. Certainly not longer than 5. So let's assume that Hoses' mother has this child for 5 years, probably less. Then Pharaoh's daughter had him for 35 years and he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and he was mighty in word and in deed. When he got to be 40 years of age, what governed his life from then on? Was it the 5 years or the 35 years? It was the 5 years. This is very impressive. The sense of destiny, of belonging to God's chosen people which was put into him in the first few years of his childhood could not get taken out by 35 years of Egyptian training. So relax. In other words, in this sense, we need to have faith and a proper exercise in the first 5 years. Roman Catholics have a saying "Give me a child till the age of 7 and I'll have a Catholic for life". That is their principle. This is according to the word of God. I would say give us a child for 5 years with the proper exercise that we see in these parents, in Manoah and his wife, in the parents of Moses, and in the parents of Samuel.

Samuel is another case. His mother had him just until he got weaned. It is very explicit there. Again, not more than 5 years, probably 3 to 4 years. When he was weaned, immediately she brought him up to the temple and it says, "lent him." What it means is that she gave him to the Lord, and he dwelt in the house of God. But in what kind of environment? We think, "Oh, how wonderful, he grew up in the house of God, that is like growing up in the church life." No it is not. Why? Eli was a man who did not hear the word of God and Eli's sons were corrupt and rotten to the core. This is the environment. Eli's sons committed fornication in the front of the temple. They stole the offerings, the burnt offerings that were supposed to go to the Lord. This is how rotten and corrupt the environment was. This was a time of darkness in the house of God. It was a time of degradation and corruption, and a 3-year-old boy is brought into that environment to grow up. I would not want my boy to grow up at 3 years old in such an environment. But Samuel's case is wonderful because what his mother put into him, molded his character to withstand the evil and immorality around him. You see, all these parents are believing parents. Another believing parent was Timothy's mother. What she put into him of the faith is what he lived by, and all the environmental corruption did not touch him. His father was a Greek and probably unbelieving. Samuel was a child who grew up to minister before the Lord as a child with a linen ephod. He was a person, who as a child heard the voice of God. I tell you, you believe me, this has to do with the first few years. We believe God is sovereign. But when we are grand parents, that is the time to say that God is sovereign. Today as parents of young children, it all depends on us. Do you see what I am saying? On the one hand God has His choosing. "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." But today we do not know that. We do not know that until they are fully-grown and manifested. So today we need to act and bear the responsibility as if everything depended upon us. On the other hand, if it turns out good, it is the Lord's mercy. So still you are not going to get the credit. As parents we have the responsibility to exercise. If your child turns out good, it is altogether God's mercy during this present age. But we believe that if we have the proper exercise, then they will all turn out in the right way by God's mercy. By the mercy of the Lord, by the promise of the Lord, and by the provision of the Lord, they will all turn out in a good way. So we need to see that the beginning is not when they go to school. By the time they go to school, by the age of five, it is all over. In one sense it is all over if we haven't put anything into them before then. Then the world has its shot at them in kindergarten. Kindergarten is Egypt. We need to see this.

So we got very exercised and very burdened about the pre-school children. . This is not a baby-sitting. This is not a filling of time. I tell you, my spirit got provoked one day when I went down to spy out a little bit and I saw two sisters with a whole bunch of 2 and 3 year olds. The kids were crawling all over the place and the sisters were sitting in the corner having a good time fellowshiping, enjoying the Lord together. The kids were just all on their own and I got mad. My spirit got provoked. The Lord got angry in me. This is not the way! No, this is the wrong concept! We do not take this! Every time is precious with them! This does not mean that we just sit and talk with them. We may do a lot of things with them, but we will care for them. If we are playing blocks or trains on the floor with them, we care for them. If we are taking them to the park and showing them the birds and the trees, we care for them. If we are telling them a little bit about how God made them, we care for them. We are not careless about them. If we care for them in a thorough way from the time before they are born, I tell you, these children will really be something.

Can you imagine the church life in 20 years? It will be glorious! We can forget about the campuses. We will have our own crop and they will be bringing them in from the campuses spontaneously. We won't have to have 40-year-old students going to the campus. This is an emergency so we may have to do it now, but that is not the proper way. It is because we have dropped the ball over these years. We haven't cared for the children properly, believe me. We realize we haven't cared for the children properly. We have missed this in the recovery. We have missed the matter of the children. We considered - just let the junior highers take care of the grade school kids and let the high schoolers take care of the junior highers - and it is all chaos. I am not pointing the finger anywhere because we are all short. But anyway, this is the shortage with us. There are too many children brought up by us going into the world. Too many 8-year-old children saying "I don't want to go to the children's meeting." There is something wrong. We need to start from the beginning.

The main thing is we need to see the vision. The vision and the burden and the goal of the whole thing is to make them wise unto salvation. To bring them all into what has already been promised to them. Why? As material for God's house; as those who belong to the church already. We need to bring them up in this way.

Now we will cover what we have done just briefly. What we have realized is that we need to have a kind of definite plan for every age group, or every two years (however you combine them). In Anaheim we have about 180 children -from 1 year old up through the 6th grade. So we had enough where we could separate boys from girls in all the school ages. Also, we combined no more than two school grades. So we have 5th and 6th grade boys, 5th and 6th grade girls, 4th grade boys, 4th grade girls, 2nd and 3rd grade boys, 2nd and 3rd grade girls, kindergarten and 1st grade boys, and kindergarten and 1st grade girls. Then we have preschool combined with both boys and girls together. We have a 4-year-old group, a 3-year-old group, a 2-year-old group and a 1-year-old group. The first year they are up in the nursing room with the mother. After the first year, we take them. That is because we have a lot in number. Of course, practically you just need to work out whatever is suitable in your locality, according to your situation. But whatever you do, there needs to be a plan every year. You need to pray. You need to be exercised before the Lord, and you need to have a definite plan for every year.

All this developed over the months as we fellowshiped. What we did as we began, because we had so many, was to meet with the parents from the oldest children's group down. In other words, we met with the 5th and 6th grade serving ones for boys. Then we met with the ones serving with the 5th and 6th grade girls. Then the 4th, etc. Week by week we met with each group, and as we prayed and fellowshiped, something came out of the direction, the goal and a plan for each year and for each level all the way down.

When we came to the pre-schoolers I said to my wife, "I don't have the foggiest notion what to do. What can you do with pre-schoolers?" Then I began to read these passages that we read in the Old Testament and I got some vision. I got more excited about the pre-schoolers than I did about the school ages, because that is where we have to begin. If we begin properly there, half of the job is done. Anyway, the main thing with the pre-schoolers is this. I will just give you a general principle and then the details are worked out in each age. With the pre-school children the main thing is we begin to inoculate them against the world. These are the years that we have the children in our hands and the influence of the world is minimal, not absent, but minimal. We can control their environment to a great extent. Our influence is the greatest influence on them, especially the mothers. But anyway all of us are together. So we realized this is the crucial time to inoculate them against the world.



The time is not when they are 14 years of age. It is too late by then. They have already gotten the bug; they got the disease already. From the time we get them at 1 year of age, 2 years of age, 3 years of age, we begin to inoculate them, "You are different. You are different based on 1 Corinthians 7:14. You are separated; you are not the same as other children. You belong to the Lord. God made you. He made you for Himself. He didn't make you for the world or for other things. He made you for Himself. He made you for the church. The church is your family. You have a mommy and you have a daddy and you have a big brother and you have big sister, but you also have a bigger family. Your bigger family is the church, not just Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle Joe and Aunt Susie but you have the church. This is your family."

We begin here. At 1 year old we tell them these things. At 2 years of age we tell them these things. We begin to instill this in them. Otherwise, what do you think Moses' mother did? How could he, at 40 years of age, realize, "I'm a Hebrew! I'm not an Egyptian!" Because she put it into him. "You are a Jew. You are not an Egyptian, you are for God. The Jews are God's people. You, little boy, at 2 years old, you are for God. You are one of God's chosen people. You have a promise on you." Do you see? We start to tell them, I would say, even from the time they are born. The mothers need to talk to them while nursing. As you are feeding that child you tell them, "Little child, oh, you are for God. You are not for the world. You are not for God's enemy. You are for God and for His house. You are for God's purpose on the earth. You are for the church. You have a wonderful family." Don't worry; we won't put you away in the "loony" bin. Just talk to the child from the time it is born. Before it is born, you need to pray, "Lord how could we order the life of this child." Anyway, you have a certain number of hours during the day when you are nursing this child, so put something in besides the milk. Don't laugh, believe me, if you do this for 3 years, for 2 years or even for 1 year, while nursing that child, it will make a big difference. This is the exercise of your faith. It may look stupid to talk to a child who is one week old. It seems kind of silly, but you do it anyway. So instead of saying "da da" and "goo goo" and all that funny stuff, and singing nursery rhymes to it, infuse faith! This is a good exercise of your faith. This will stir up your faith. Oh, the promise on this little child! Hallelujah! This child is for God. This child is for God's house. "Little son, little daughter, you are for God." This is the way Moses' mother did. Believe me. In Deuteronomy 6:5-7 we find out that in the rising up and in the sitting down they put the word of the Lord into the children, "These are the words which I command thee. These words shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In other words, all day long you put the word of God into the children, in this kind of way. Not to tell them so they know all the Kings of Israel and this and that. But in the way of life. In the way of God's promise. In the way of what we see in God's recovery. We need to put this into them. "From the time they get up-until the time they lie down, in all things. It is not a matter of sitting them down for an hour every week and giving them a lesson. No, no. That is altogether off. It is all day long, every opportunity, putting something into them. "Little child, 3 years old, you know you are different. You are not like other children. God loves you and he loves them, but God gave you to me and we are for the church. God gave birth to you in the church, in the house of God." In all these different things, we need to exercise our faith over them before they get to school.

We would also begin to inoculate them about some of the things. At 4 years old when you go to the shopping center in December and they see the Christmas tree, we would tell them, "You know, that is idolatry and God hates that. This came from pagan Germany - this green tree. It came out of the demons of the woods." You need to measure to them in their understanding.

But you need to tell them the truth. We need to help them not to punch anybody in the nose at school over it, but on the other hand they need to realize that we do not do this. Why? Because God is not happy with this. We don't have Santa Claus come to us. There is no such thing as Santa Claus. God isn't happy with this. God isn't happy with what these worldly people do. They don't love God, but we love God. This is the way we need to talk to them. Before they go to school we inoculate them.

Then in the kindergarten level we realize this is when we deal with these things very specifically as they come up, like Halloween. I got more than provoked in my spirit last year at Halloween time when some church kids came ringing my doorbell "trick or treat." You see this is an abomination to the Lord. No such thing should happen in the house of God. We can never tolerate this. We need to begin with the little children. Never mind peer pressure and all that nonsense. We do not allow this, and we teach them in a nice way. We teach them that this is something related to demons and God hates it. They are against God and we love God and we won't do this.

So as the things come up, in the kindergarten years especially, we begin to tell them in more detail. The way to do this is to get out the encyclopedia and read to them about Christmas and read to them about Halloween and read to them about Valentines Day. Don't let them think that we are kooky people with funny ideas. You send them to the library. Go to the library and get the encyclopedia off the shelf and you read. You will be amazed what is in there yourself. The best kind of tracts that we could write about these things are from the Encyclopedia Britannica. Go read it yourself. You will find out that it is there. They can get it from the school library or the public library and then they will know that it is not something we, a bunch of kooky people, made up. No, no, this is a fact. So we begin to teach them. In the kindergarten and the 1st grade especially, we inoculate them concerning the world. Then we tell them more about the church, about God, about how God has a plan for them, how God loves them and how God made them for himself. We tell them in a general way, but we do not put anything on them such as "Now kneel down and confess." No, no, we just put the truth in them. We just give them the scriptures to make them wise unto salvation. Salvation is the goal. So we will do it gradually.

Then in the 2nd and 3rd grade we realize, by this time, they are exposed to quite a bit. So now we need some kind of restriction in a more definite way. For this year, this period of time, what we are doing with them is that we are giving them the Ten Commandments. We are telling them that God has a law and that God has a standard. God has a moral law in the universe, and everything in our humanity is governed by this. Your humanity can either be uplifted or damaged by how we handle and respond to God's moral law. So we give them the Ten Commandments. And we may spend several weeks on each point developing it according to their ability. The little boys need to be strongly told not to steal, not to lie, not to cheat, not to do all these kind of things.

Then in the 4th grade we give them the positive examples of the young people in the Bible. We give them the negative side to restrict and limit them, and then we give them the positive side to show them what is a young person for God. What about Joseph and what about Samuel as a child in the house of God? What about David, Daniel, Ruth, Esther and so many other young people in the Bible. In Timothy, there are things that indicate something of Timothy's childhood. We indicate to them some positive examples of the Bible. We give them these examples week after week. We may have one thing in the first 2 months and then another thing in the second 2 months, but they are all along this line of the plan of this year. Our cycle in Anaheim runs for the 10 month school year divided into two month segments. We spend the time putting into them all the positive examples. We show them what pleases God and what does not please God in the Bible, especially with the young people in the Bible, those they can relate to.

Then in the 5th and 6th grades, we have a definite plan that everyone would be saved by the end of the year. In the first 2-month period (we take the ten month school year) we take the time to show them how much they need to be saved. We show them from all different angles. Then in the next 2-month period, we show them God's salvation from all different angles. Then we take the third 2-month period to help them, from all different angles, to be saved. Some need to repent of their sins. Some need to call on the Lord. Others need to be helped to believe or to confess. We give them the gospel in a definite way. This is the first time in a definite, specific way that we preach the gospel to them. Everything else is leading up to this. Many will be saved before this. In fact, probably most of them will be saved. But anyway, at this point we will preach the gospel to them and give them the truth of the gospel. They need to believe, they need to repent, they need to confess, they need to be cleansed, and they need to be forgiven, they need to be baptized. We give them all the things related to the gospel in a simple way week by week, so that by the end of this period everyone of them should be definitely saved. Then in the next 2-month period, we help them to contact the Lord in the word and in prayer. After this, we fellowship something with them concerning their daily life, and the junior high. In this last 2-month period, we get them ready for junior high.

My point in giving you this is not as a kind of pattern that all the churches should follow. That is not our idea. This developed out of our fellowship. I hope this afternoon that you see the principle and this is that we need a definite plan. Whether it is this or something else, it works toward the goal. The goal needs to be clear and that is that they all need to be saved. They all have to be definitely saved, contacting the Lord in a definite, living way by the time they get to junior high. Then every year we work up to this in stages. Now next year we may realize, out of our burden and fellowship, that there is a better way. This is all just the first time around for us. But it is working. It is working very well. A lot of the parents are encouraged.

We require that all the parents of the children must serve in the Children's Meeting. That was the principle Brother Lee laid down, so we got on the ball and we followed in this point. That way no one has to serve more than once a month. But for continuity, we serve two weeks in a row. We do it in a rotating way; so every week there is someone there from the previous week. We have eight serving on a group. So 1 and 2 serve together, then 2 and 3, 3 and 4, 4 and 5, 5 and 6, 6 and 7, 7 and 8 and 8 and 1. We have two weeks on and six weeks off. This gives us some continuity. The principle is all the parents have to serve and we do our best according to the arrangements.

As to the details, what they do from week to week, the principle is PRAY! There is no other way. Most of the time in the past, the Children's meeting spent their time in devising ways. Any way works if you care, pray, have a burden and fellowship. There is no right and wrong way. We may have a lesson with them. We may take them to the park or we may do crafts. With the older girls, they take them to the homes and teach them how to bake cookies and do things in a practical way. We teach the boys woodworking, or how to fix the plug on the lamp cord or replace a washer in the faucet. All of this is [our parenthood](#). It is not filling up time. No, no, we don't run out of ideas and then take them to the park to run around. Even taking them to the park is our caring.

An example of this is, one morning in opening time, there was a certain story about animals. It was an allegory about how a lion is always tearing people up and an ostrich is always hiding from people, and all the rest of the animals were different kinds of characters. They are all different, but the Lord loves us all and wants us all.

The story was something like this, something very simple. Then one of the groups went to the park to play a ball game. Well, within 15 minutes, all the animals showed up. One of the boys swung and missed the ball. Another child started up (yelling) and soon all started in. Well, the brother who was there stopped the ball game. He said, "What about the story?" Then he related the whole story again. He said, "You are the lion and you are the pussy cat and you are the ostrich. Isn't that true boys? So let's do it again and let's care for one another." He gave them a little talk right on the spot. Then they played the game again and it was a different ball game. This is our care. What we do is not the point. You could have never gotten that across by sitting down and telling them. No, no, you need to be in activities. Of course we have a long time, 2 1/2 hours, and we have to do a lot of things. We have to have variety. But anyway, pray. Whatever you do is okay if you have the prayer and the burden and fellowship together with this kind of exercise.

In less than one hour, we have gone through what took us ten weeks to go through and develop. This was like an express train, but I hope you see something. That there is a goal for all these children. The goal is to make them wise unto salvation; to bring them all to the Lord and into the church.

(message typed as spoken)