

Christ- Centered



Biblical Training

**Matthew 6:33; 1 John 2:6;
2 Chronicles 16:9**

HELPFUL INGREDIENTS FOR LEADING CHILDREN TO CHRIST

by

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Purpose and Objective - People have been asking me what are helpful ingredients that God gave me to use for leading many children to Christ in the CEF work. I have found many to be very helpful, even necessary (many came from CEF training). **They are as follows:**

The Key is for the children to see the dynamics of Love and Care of God that flows through us. It must not just be an academic exercise in a club or Bible lesson just to get a lesson done. They must see that we have a loving interest in them whether or not we have a short or long time with them. They need to see the God and His love behind our witness as we communicate with them.

These helpful ingredients are as follows (these are not in special order - they should be melded together):

1. Much Prayer for the Children - Leaders need to pray together for God's greatest blessings and increases in ministry (e.g. Jabez prayer) on behalf of the children and leadership. I have used this prayer, and God has responded with many coming to Christ at the same time when given the Gospel invitation. We need to pray for the children as a group and as individuals. We must believe that this is God's work, and He works through us to accomplish it (vine and the branches concept). Apart from God we can do nothing.

2. Mutual Love and Care - There must be a building of love (over the week in 5-day clubs) of our time with them where a mutual love relationship is developed. When they sense that we love them, they return that love. When we represent God as a leader and after mutual love is established, they turn to the God of love that we represent. The living love must be there in us as a key message with the story in the Bible.

3. Fun - It helps to have fun with them on an individual and group basis. I have some string tricks I show them when we begin that mystifies them. They all want to see them. This is fun. In camp (not allowed in regular GNC and 5-day clubs), I allow them to jump all over me, and we roll on the ground as they as a group jump all over me. In one 5-day club I swung an older kid around. He kept coming back for one more time. When we take time to play and have with and enjoy them, they sense we greatly care for them. Many do not get this attention in their homes.

4. Love and Care - When we talk about God's love when presenting the Wordless Book, they must see God's love in and from us. They must see that we really care for them. They want to see that we love the God we are talking about. If we represent God then God's love should be seen in us. When they feel that we love and truly care for them and show that love and care, they respond to the God that loves them. Our love is shown by personal attention and interest, and working with them on their level and having fun - bringing the Truth of God in Word and in life.

5. Identification with the People in the Bible Stories (CEF calls such items as links) - When we teach, it helps to get the children to identify with the situation of the people in the stories. Ask them if they have similar circumstances in the links Then they respond to the situation in the story. These are most important to use.

For examples:

a. When Moses was having trouble with the people, he went to the Lord for instructions for what to

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do. Ask the children if they see themselves having problems, so they go to the Lord for help and instructions. When Moses prayed that God would help the people, they now pray for their parents and friends.

b. When they learn the story of Philip and the Ethiopian, ask the children if they identify with them. Philip was a person that God worked in to deliver a message. Do they see themselves as being a person that God works in to help deliver a message? They can invite their friends to the clubs or share the Gospel with them. Do they see themselves being like the Ethiopian that God is working in to receive a message? They then listen to and receive the Gospel.

c. When they see the sinful person that Zacchaeus was, being selfish, greedy, and stealing from the people, and in need of conversion, do they see themselves as being sinful and in need of a Savior? Do they see themselves with a sinful heart? They may see the need of the Savior to come to their personal house.

d. When they see that Christ came to Saul on the Damascus Road and had him go to His servant Ananias for help to be saved, do they see themselves in need of salvation and the need to come to the CEF leader for help for God to save them? But God used Saul who became Paul in a major way in His service. Do they know that God wants to use them in His service and may begin training them now?

6. Work at Their Physical Level - When we teach and sing songs, get down at their physical level and look into their eyes. If they are sitting on the floor or ground, then get down on the floor or ground with them or sit in a chair near the ground and floor. When I taught a missionary story, I laid on the ground next to them and looked into their eyes. You could just see that they were sensing that God may want to use them as a missionary.

When we talk or sing, look into their eyes and draw them in. Show that we love and care for them. Get the children to help hold the singing charts and/or be by your side. The little (younger) children love the song, "You and Me" with the hand motions. They love this song because we identify with each other and together we have need of Christ's Cross, and it is easy and fun for them to learn and sing, particularly with the hand motions. And when we sing it, the leader needs to look into the eyes of the children. I have heard them sing this song when they were leaving the club and on the playground afterward. This song seems to generate a love and care in their hearts.

(I realize that when we use flannel graphs, getting down lower is difficult. We may have to use shorter legs on the easel. It is much easier when the pictures we are using are in a bound book as they were for the 5-day clubs or when the children sit in chairs.)

7. Believe that God Loves and Saves Regardless of the Amount and Category of Sin - The children must see that God will save them regardless of the amount and category of their sin. There is no sin that God will not forgive when they believe in Christ as Savior. There is no person that God does not love. They can do nothing that will prevent God from loving them and saving them.

In CEF camp, the children were acting up so I began to teach love from 1 Cor. 13. One child asked me, "does this mean we have to love Satan." So I said "come down here (from his top bunk) and hit me in the stomach as hard as you can." All the boys gathered around to see this. He hit me in the stomach. Then I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, "Sam I love you very much, but I do not like what you do." They got the message immediately. No matter how bad we are, God loves us and will save us (but not Satan).

8. For the more difficult older children (10-12 year olds) - I have worked with "very difficult" older children who were quite rebellious. For these children, I have found the following to work for two years in a row at CEF camp:

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Explain to them the concept of team work. A team could be an orchestra, a football team, or God's team of Christians. In each case, it is the leader who works all things together for good as each person on the team plays their position with excellence. If you are not willing to be a team member, or in you want to play your position the way you want that is different than that from the leader, then you are off the team. In secular society you end up in jail. With God, you end up in the Lake of Fire or not being as useful to God. If you want to be successful in life and with God, you need to be a team player under a leader. For all of us, we need to be under the leadership of God. Using this technique, God used me to lead tough, rebellious kids to Christ. The children want acceptance and to be part of something. When they understand, they pray and seek out being a team player. They need to realize that people do not want them around unless they are team players. If they want friends they must be team players and obey authority.

9. Slow Learners or Those Not Paying Attention - Many children come from homes where their parents give them but little attention. These children seem to be a little aloof and do not want to participate as much. Many believe they cannot learn and act quite rebellious. These children come around when they see that you are sincerely in their corner, care about them, and am willing to spend extra time with them to give them extra help, such as to memorize the Scriptures. They come around when you train them to be a team player.

10. Working for Excellence - Sometimes the children want to do the least they can for prizes. In one 5-day club, two boys came up to me and asked if they would get a prize if they memorized only four Scripture verses instead of the five desired. I told them yes even though it would be a lessor prize. But I also told them that if they came to me for a job I probably would not hire them. But if did I might pay them \$8 per hour. But if they memorized all five verses with excellence, I would give them a job of \$40 per hour. Which job do you want? They went out and memorized all five verses.

11. Use of Object Lessons - The children understand faster if we use object lessons that help explain what we are talking about. The ones discussed above about love, being on a team, and working for excellence are examples of object lessons.

12. Leading the Children to Christ - After the invitation is given, we must ensure to the degree that we can that the children who come forward to be saved understand what they are doing and God is tugging at their hearts. Many come forward because you ask them to, their friends are coming forward, and/or it seems right to do. We should ask each one why they came forward. We should go through the Gospel story several times to ensure they understand. Ask them questions about sin and Christ dying on the Cross. Go through the Scriptures with them and have them read them. Do not hurry the process. Going through the ritual of the ABC approach by itself does not save. God must be working in each child. Make sure they understand before you ask them to pray. After the prayer, ask them now whose child are they?

Epilog - As leaders, we are no longer the same persons when God uses us to lead children to Christ. It a fulfilling privilege and brings added value to the meaning of our lives.