

THE ROMANS ROAD FOR CHILDREN

Session 4: Truths About the Gospel

In his book "Six Hours one Friday", Max Lacado wrote of a friend named Joy, who had taught a Sunday School class in an under privileged area. Joy had in her class a timid nine year old girl named Barbara. Max writes this, *"Barbara's difficult home life had left her afraid and insecure. For the weeks that my friend was teaching the class, Barbara never spoke. Never. While the other children talked she sat. While the others sang, she was silent, while the others giggled, she was quiet. Always present, always, listening, always speechless; until the day Joy gave a class on Heaven. Joy talked about Seeing God. She talked about tearless eyes and the deathless lives. Barbara was fascinated; she wouldn't release Joy from her stare. She listened with hunger; and then she raised her hand, "Miss Joy?" Joy was stunned! Barbara had never asked a question. "Yes Barbara?" "Is Heaven for girls like me?" Barbara couldn't have been more qualified."*

There may be Barbaras in your class wondering if they can take that Romans Road leading to an eternal life with God in Heaven. In our last sessions we spent time thinking about what a child needs to know about Heaven, about God and about sin. These are foundational truths, but we can't stop there if the child is to have hope of having a relationship with God right now and one day going to Heaven. We must present the Gospel, Christ's death, His burial, and His resurrection.

In this session we will look at how to clearly present the Good News of salvation to boys and girls. Let's look again at Romans 5:8. You will also want to unfold that fourth flashcard. You read the first part of this verse earlier, but now you will want to read the whole thing to the children. It says, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8 (KJV) After reading the verse take time to explain what it means, as you explain the verse keep in mind a couple of questions to answer. **Who is Christ? Why could Jesus take my place? Why would Jesus take my place? When, or how, did He do this?** Thinking about these questions will help you explain the Gospel more fully.

Before you talk about why He could take my place, you will want to tell the children who Jesus is. They need to understand that Jesus Christ is God the Son. When Jesus was born on earth over 2,000 years ago, He lived on earth fully man, and yet He is fully God. Therefore, He knows the perfect way to live, and has always had a perfect relationship with God the father. God required a perfect sacrifice for sin; Jesus was the only man who was ever perfect, thus he was the only one who could pay the price for sin, and make a way to have a relationship with the Father. As you begin to explain this verse, remember to think about, **why could Jesus take my place?** Thinking about why He would take my place, will remind you to explain His great love for the child. His love is like no other love the child will ever experience.

God didn't wait for the child to become good and then die for him; rather, He died according to this verse, "while we were still sinners". Jesus died knowing that every person was a sinner and needed to be set free from the power of sin. Jesus knew it was the only way for sin to be forgiven and for man to be

able to live life with God. You will also want to explain why and how Jesus payed for sin; that He bled and died on a cross willingly giving His life for you and for me. No one made Jesus do this; He chose to take the punishment you and I deserve. Explain that Jesus was buried and rose again on the third day, and many people saw Him before He returned to Heaven where He is now preparing a place for those who believe on Him to live with God forever.

Let's review the main points that you want to communicate to the children as you explain the Gospel from Romans 5:8. They are, *Who Christ Jesus is, the work He did on the cross, He died, was buried and rose again, why He did this, because of His love for us and that he is alive today in Heaven.* Remember that children have heard that there are lots of ways to get to Heaven and to have a relationship with God. In your teaching of the Gospel, strive to be very clear that the reason our sins can be forgiven and that we can have a right relationship with God is because of the work Jesus did on our behalf.

Continuing down the Romans Road to the next verse will be smooth if you will use a link like, "Have you believed on Him?" This will lead you naturally into the last thought in Romans 10:13. Once you have explained these truths to the children, Who God is, that all are sinners and deserve to be separated from God, that Jesus took the punishment we deserve providing a way to the Father. You will want to give the boys and girls an opportunity to respond to the message they have heard.

In our next session we will talk about how to invite the children to respond. But before we do that, I would like to demonstrate for you how you can simply teach the gospel to children. By now you are very used to this demonstration process, in the next moments, we are going to look at how to explain the Gospel in children's language. We will begin with the link from Romans 5:8, explain the Gospel message, and conclude with the link leading to Romans 10:13. So take out your paper and Jot down the following things, first, **What did the child learn about Jesus?** Second, **what did you hear taught about the work of Christ?** Now listen with childlike ears, and write with Teachers eyes.

Demonstration:

"Because of God's love for you, he made a way that your sins could be forgiven so that you could live life with God. Listen to Romans 5:8 to see if you can hear the way God made. It says, *"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Did you hear the way that He made for our sins to be taken away? It's in the last part of the verse, it says, "Christ died for us." That means that Jesus, God the Son, who had no sin of His own, died for you and for me.

Why did Jesus die you might ask? It was because He loves you so very much and wants to have a friendship with you. But because of your sin, He knew that there was nothing you could do to come to Him on your own. Because Jesus is without sin He could take the punishment we deserve on Himself. We deserved death, being separated from God.

He allowed men to put nails into His hands and His feet, and He hung on a cross for all the wrong things we have done. Before you were ever born Jesus knew you would do sinful things, and in order for your sin to be taken away and to have that special friendship with God, a perfect sacrifice had to be given. Jesus was the only one who could take the punishment and make a way to the Father so He bled and died on a cross so you and could have our sins forgiven. After Jesus died He was buried, kind of like in a tomb, but do you know what happened on the third day? On the third day He came back to life. After he came back to life, He walked on the earth for forty more days and lots of people saw Him, then He went back to Heaven to be with His Father, God. That's where He is now making a place ready for anybody who believes on Him, to live with God forever! Have you believed on Him?"

(This concludes the demonstration.)

Observations:

Did you hear the clear teaching of who Jesus is and what He did? I trust the demonstrations help you as you plan out what you will say as you teach the wonderful news of the Gospel to children. Children sitting in your class may be wondering how they can have their sins forgiven and be able to get to Heaven just like Barbara did. They may have heard the stories many times about Jesus, or not very many times at all. They may have been coming to your class every week, or maybe they have just been there once. But perhaps they have never heard the Gospel shared in such a way that they realize it is for them personally. They may be wondering if life with God is for "a boy or girl like me", just like Barbara did. Will you work on sharing the Gospel clearly so children will want to turn from their sins to the One who can save them? Ask God to help you work towards that end starting today.