

THE ENCOURAGER

Help for Sunday School Teachers— Dedicated to those who take the Word of Life to Children Everywhere

The ENCOURAGER

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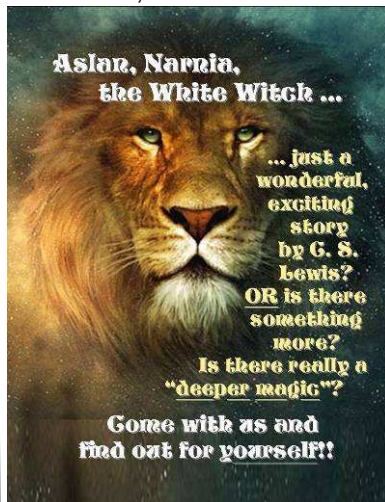
ADVENTURES IN NARNIA!

I love stories! I always have and probably always will! They stick in my mind and if there is a life lesson that goes along with the story, the lesson stays in my mind a lot longer too!

Another man loved stories ... at least he had a great imagination ... and he wanted to write an exciting story that would teach a lesson, especially to children. That man was C. S. Lewis . . . or Clive Staples Lewis. Actually, he preferred to be called Jack and I think I would like that better too. Maybe you don't know what he wrote. If you looked it up, you would find that he wrote lots of books. But the ones that I like so much are the books in the "Chronicles of Narnia." How about "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" ... does that ring a bell?! Recently, Disney did a DVD video showing that story and even more recently, they did the "Prince Caspian" story which is another of the chronicles.

It was suggested to me that maybe that would be a good theme for a week of meetings for our Youth Bible Club. I must confess I was skeptical initially, but very soon after the week started, I realized that it was a great idea and that the children AND adults thoroughly enjoyed it. I think that most people have seen the movie and are familiar with the story line. I also think that few people realized when they were watching it that Mr. Lewis had a wonderful lesson to teach. So, as the story is related during the course of a week and with the lessons from Scripture related side-by-side, the audience seems to grasp the message very easily.

So, here's what we did. First of all, we advertised the series with a question on the front of the flyer (a picture of Aslan in the background) ... **Aslan, the White Witch, Narnia ... just a wonderful, exciting story by C. S. Lewis? OR is there something more? Is there really a "deeper magic"?** Then we put the details of the local meetings on the back of the flyer. I also put a modified picture of the lamppost on the back.



For each of five nights of lessons, I included the following:

- A memory verse
- A "Truth for the Night"
- A story line from the books
- A parallel Bible message as illustrated in the story

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Some things I've Learned

I've learned:

- that you can do something in an instant that will give you a heartache for life.
- that it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.
- that you either control your attitude or it controls you.
- that money is a lousy way of keeping score.
- that heroes are those who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.
- that two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.
- that credentials on the wall do not necessarily make a decent human being.
- that our background & circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.
- that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.



There are a series of verse cards that I print 8 per page.

The verses that I use are as follows:



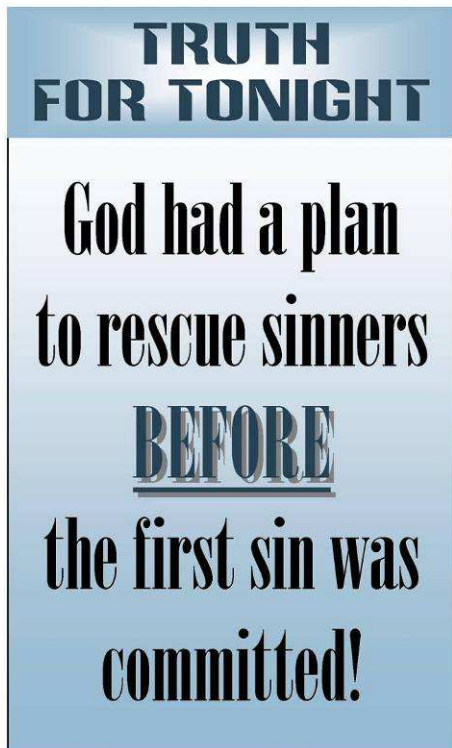
1. When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Romans 5:12
2. For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. 1 John 2:16
3. The LORD is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. But He does not excuse the guilty. Numbers 14:18
4. For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21
5. "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live." John 11:25
6. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him. 1 Corinthians 2:9

I think it is evident by the verses shown that I generally use the version or translation that best presents the point of the verse as it connects with the message. Obviously, that is personal choice. Note: there is a sixth verse because I have also done the series in a six-session format as well.

The next item is a "Truth for the Night" poster that I do. That truth is reviewed each session along with any of the previous truths that have been dealt with. Following are the truths that I used for the six night series:

1. **The devil is your enemy and he wants to destroy you.**
2. **The devil will give YOU whatever you want to keep YOU from the Truth.**
3. **God's Law says that every sin must be punished.**
4. **God had a plan to rescue sinners BEFORE the first sin was committed.**
5. **Jesus MUST die and MUST rise from the dead for us to have eternal life.**
6. **GOOD people don't go to Heaven. ONLY saved people go to Heaven.**

This poster is the one that I use for the fourth night. I print these posters 11" X 17" and laminate them and just add one of them each night to the room as the series progresses. I have found it very helpful to review them constantly to reinforce the messages. Sometimes, as part of a game or quiz, we ask the kids to tell us what the truths are.



As far as the story line is concerned, it is up to the person speaking to become very familiar with the actual story ... specifically, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." I use the book and I use the video and I use the series from Focus on the Family Radio Theater to try to get as many of the details in my head as is possible. I review them almost every day in preparation for the meeting that night. There is something else that I do in connection with this point that I think is very important.

The last of the books that Lewis wrote is called "The Magician's Nephew" but it is actually the first in the series chronologically. The first night of the series, I tell that story in total ... yes, it's rushed and abbreviated ... because it explains SO much of what comes in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." It explains where the White Witch comes from; it explains the magic of the wardrobe; and it explains how Narnia came to be and why there is 100 years of winter and never any Christmas. I strongly recommend that the teacher become just as familiar with that story as "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

I have been able to find a number of pictures on the web that I have printed and display during the course of the week that shows the various stages of the stories. I believe that it is very important to use something like this as it gets and keeps the attention of the listeners and helps me, too, in keeping on track with the story line. In addition, I also

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bought a nice stuffed lion to use for my Aslan. I have also gotten some "lion roars" off the internet and put them on a disk and play them through an MP3 player at the appropriate times. There is a lot of flexibility in teaching the theme and I am only telling you what we have done and what seems to work for us. Added below are a couple samples of the posters we use to show some of the various stages of the story. There aren't too many pictures we could find in connection with "The Magician's Nephew," but there were enough that it made it interesting.



As for the outline of the messages, I have included them in abbreviated form below. I can supply more details for the outline if requested. I use lots of other "props" as far as the Scriptural part of the message is concerned and again, this is entirely up to the teacher/speaker.

1. Diggory's willfulness and the entrance of evil into Narnia; introduction to the being and the power and the mercy of Aslan, the great lion
2. Deception and fall of Edmund
3. Requirements and penalty of the law
4. Purpose and plan for Edmund's rescue
5. Death and resurrection; defeat of the dark magic
6. Ultimate victory and promised fulfilled

I really believe that using this story line is an excellent way to present the Gospel. For many children, they have "heard it all." But it seems that this theme allows for a way of getting the Gospel in from a bit of a different perspective that makes the listeners a bit more attentive and interested.

Of course, the primary goal is that the Gospel will be presented in an interesting, understandable and God-honoring way that ultimately, souls will be brought to Christ for salvation.

I'm sure that you can tell that Bill is the kind of man who makes sure that what he does, he does well. Paying attention to preparation, detail and the perception of the audience is his way of showing how much he cares for souls, and how far he is willing to go to give them the message in a way that is fresh and powerful. May the Lord bless you too as you seek to learn from his example and as you use innovation and many other resources to bring the message of the gospel to the attention of your audience.