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Vacation Bible Schools

News from the Education Department

Margie Seely, Ione, CA

This summer two churches hosted Vacation Bible School programs—Sacramento, California, and Cedartown, Georgia. For each, the theme was “The God of the Impossible.” This timeless truth was illustrated over the course of five days through Bible stories and science and art projects. Nutritious lunches were provided each day, and a short program on Sabbath concluded the program. The following is a brief summary of what the children experienced.

Monday—“Impossible Victory”

The week began with the powerful story of the Israelites conquering Jericho. Jericho was a strong and well-fortified city. Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible to go against such a city. But God asked only that His people obey.

The Israelite army was instructed to walk around the city once each day for six days. On the seventh day they were again to march around the city. This time, however, they would complete the circuit six more times. After the completion of the seventh trip around, the people were given a signal, and they shouted

with all their might. God blessed their faith, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat.

After hearing this exciting story, all attendees were invited to step outside to reenact the story. Round the building the quiet group marched seven times, giving them a small idea of what the real march was like. At last, when the signal was given, everyone erupted into joyous shouting!

Following the Bible story, students learned some of the principles of sound by playing songs on a set of Boomwhackers, eight colorful, plastic tubes that, when struck, each sound a different note on the C scale.



Tuesday–“Impossible Test”

While still a very young man, Daniel was taken prisoner by the Babylonians. In the king’s school, he and his friends determined to honor God with every part of their lives—including their diet. Taking a great risk, they refused the menu offered by the king, requesting instead a simple diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes, and pure water to drink.

They knew that this wholesome diet would provide them with clear minds so they might obey God fully. However, when they presented their plan to Melzar, prince of the eunuchs, he wasn’t so sure. Afraid that they would become sick on such a simple diet, he initially refused their request. But when Daniel asked for a ten-day trial period, Melzar relented. God blessed the faith of these four Hebrews, as He will bless all who seek to obey God.

Following the story, the children split into groups to make desserts Daniel and his friends would have enjoyed. The older students made carob fudge (see recipe on page 4), while the younger children stuffed dates with various types of nuts. After lunch, everyone enjoyed sampling these natural desserts.

Wednesday–“Impossible Escape”

The Hebrews escaped from slavery under the Egyptians, only to become trapped between the Red Sea and a high mountain range. The Egyptian army had come behind them to easily reclaim their slaves, or so they thought. God, however, had something else in mind. Moses said to the terrified people, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” Exodus 14:13.

Moses stretched out his staff over the sea, and God caused a strong east wind to blow, dividing the waters of the Red Sea and making a pathway through it. With light



from the pillar of fire, during the night that vast company crossed the Red Sea on dry land. When the Egyptians tried to follow, God troubled them, including removing the wheels from their chariots. Then, at His command, Moses again stretched out his staff, bringing down the walls of water and drowning the entire army, ending any possible future attempts at recapturing the Hebrews. In the morning, God’s people were overjoyed to see what He had done.

The students enjoyed taking part in a variety of science activities set up at stations around the room. Their favorite was making a cloud in a bottle, using a soda bottle, rubbing alcohol, and a bicycle pump. The insides of the bottle were first coated with a tiny bit of rubbing alcohol. The bicycle pump was attached at the mouth of the bottle, and the students added pressure to the bottle by pumping it full of air. When the pump was removed, a cloud instantly appeared inside the bottle. This experiment was repeated over and over again, reminding the students how God used a great cloud and also fire to lead the children of Israel through the Red Sea and beyond. Other experiments included hydro-phobic sand (sand chemically treated to resist water) and multi-colored water crystals (polymers).

Thursday–“Impossible Rescue”

When the world became so wicked that God had to destroy it, He chose Noah to be His workman. Noah spent 120 years building the ark and faithfully warning people about the upcoming Flood. Unfortunately, the only people saved in that ark were Noah and his immediate family.





The Flood was a terrifying event. The Bible tells us that “all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” Genesis 7:11-12. The destruction resulting from that torrential rainstorm, along with the immense geysers shooting out of the ground, was catastrophic. No person or land animal on the entire earth survived this event, except those in the ark. Soon Jesus will come again. Like Noah, we must faithfully warn the world that the end is near. Only those who accept Jesus will be saved.

To attempt to illustrate what it was like to have the fountains of the deep broken up, we performed a very small-scale demonstration. Six of the older students each received a 2-liter bottle of diet Coke and one package of Mentos candy. At the signal, they were directed to drop the entire package of Mentos into the bottle of Coke. This resulted in an explosion that launched the contents of the bottle of Coke several feet into the air and provided much laughter and many smiles.

Afterward the older students made murals by gluing ultraviolet-sensitive beads to cardboard squares. These beads appear white at first; but when placed under sunlight (which contains ultraviolet rays), they change color. Some beads became red, some yellow, some blue, and so on. The younger students enjoyed recreating the story of Noah’s ark with stickers.

Friday–“Impossible Love”

On the last day of the Vacation Bible School program, the children learned of the incredible love of Jesus. It is impossible for anyone to love as strongly or as deeply as He does. He showed His love to us by dying on the cross to pay for our sins. He rose again and is preparing a place for us so we can live with Him forever in heaven. But we must choose to accept His love and love Him in return.

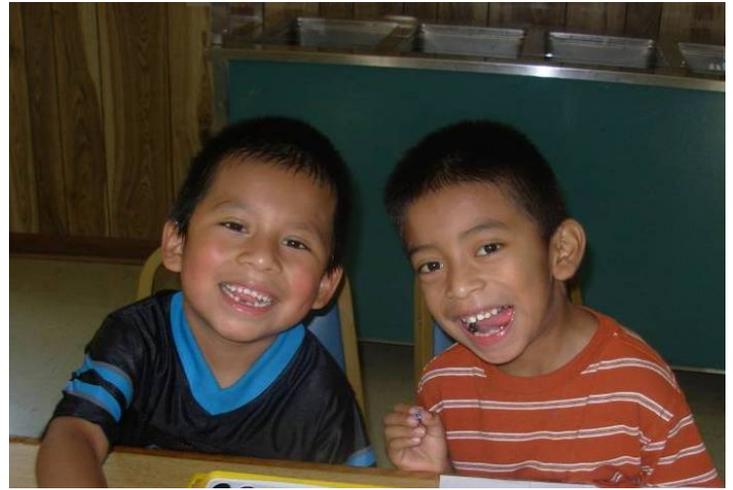
The children were encouraged to talk to Jesus anytime, anywhere, for any reason. They were invited to ask Jesus to come into their lives and live in their hearts.

The children decorated paper cups and planted flowers in them to remind them of the beautiful love of Jesus. Then, one by one, the children collected their projects, thanked us for the program, and left for home. Our prayers followed them.

Conclusion

The Sacramento church was blessed to have a total of 14 children participate in their vacation Bible school program. The Cedartown Church had close to 40. Several of these children came to the church on Sabbath with their parents. They participated in the Sabbath school, listened to the sermon, ate lunch, and visited with the church family. Many spiritual seeds were planted, and many contacts were made.

We thank the volunteers who gave of their time and talent to help out. And we thank God for the privilege of working with the littlest members of His kingdom! May He be praised!



“Jesus ... said, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.” Mark 10:14, 16.

Carob Nugget Fudge

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup honey
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup carob powder
- 1 cup peanut butter
- ½ cup sunflower seeds (optional)
- ½ cup sesame seeds
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup chopped roasted almonds

Directions:

Mix first three ingredients before adding the others. Pat into dish. Chill in fridge. Cut into squares before serving. Enjoy!

Taken from, *What's Cooking in the Benton Sisters' Kitchen?* vol. 1, p. 14. ©1994



Testimony

Sharon Eaton, Toronto, Canada

Editor's Note: This testimony was given at the Western Field Conference on Sabbath, August 21, 2010. Sharon and her brother, Richard, were baptized by their father, Pastor Jerry Eaton, at the conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on July 25, 2010.

In all my wanderings in the world, I have learned a few things; indeed **many** hard lessons were my experience.

I thought about why this was so; why were things so difficult? Everything that the world had to offer, I had. Yet I was more unhappy than ever before in my life.

Money? I had plenty. Working a fulltime job, I was able to buy whatever I wanted. But I soon learned happiness isn't found in **things**.

I thought, Friends! That's where true happiness is found! And so I surrounded myself with people who gave me company and laughter...

For a time, this seemed enough. But what was this? When my friends left, I was lonelier than before!

Was fame the answer? I worked even harder in my circle of friends to become well known and popular. Everyone knew me at the local club. Was **this** enough? No. I realized after going far down that road that, as wise King Solomon said, "All is vanity."

I found that happiness wasn't to be found out there in the world; but instead of turning to Jesus, I just turned to drugs and alcohol and stayed in instead. I was trying to cover the pain—the pain of not feeling loved and the pain of not knowing what life was about or what was going to happen to me.

Then I entered another world—the computer gaming world. Ironically, the game I played night and day for a year and a half (which anyone was hard pressed to rip me away from) was called, "Perfect World." But happiness was not there either.

Eventually God allowed Satan to take away my health, and that is when I realized my most important lesson of all. Satan is a LIAR, and Satan is a THIEF. All he wants to do is take away your health and happiness, and ultimately your life. I had been listening to him, listening to Satan's suggestions for my happiness all along without even realizing it.

I started desperately trying to change myself, wanting so badly to undo all the wicked I had done to myself and others. But this I was unable to do.

While I made these feeble efforts that were like the last gasp of a drowning swimmer, I felt Satan's presence very strongly. Often, I had the physical sensation of chains around my wrists with Satan at the other end, laughing and pulling me to do wrong. I was stuck in a lifestyle I'm not proud of.

That is when I realized my great need of Jesus. But I didn't even know how to call out to Him for help. Absolutely certain I was going to hell with nothing I could do to prevent it, I told my mom about my struggles in tears one night. What she told me changed my life forever. "Stop trying to change yourself.

Look to Jesus, and He'll change you."

I started reading *The Desire of Ages* an hour a day. By page 100 I found true peace and happiness. By page 300 I'd been set completely free. And by page 500 I was baptized.

I'm standing here because a hopeless person CAN be saved through the blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen!



"Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15:7.

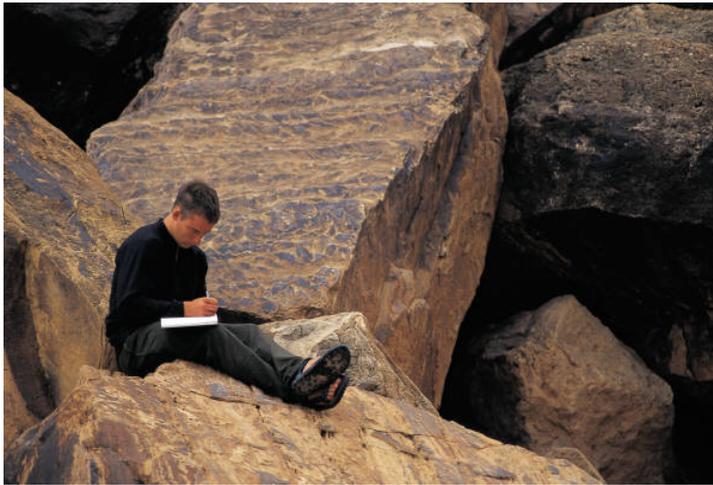
What Do You Believe?

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 546-547

The world is busy, anxious, and devoted. Evil is eagerly followed as though it were righteousness, error as though it were truth, and sin as though it were holiness. Darkness is covering the earth, and gross darkness the people. And shall God's people be asleep at such a time as this? Shall those who hold the truth be silent, as if paralyzed? Infidels declare that if they believed what Christians profess to believe, they would be far more in earnest than they. If we believe that the end of all things is at hand, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

Every soul who truly believes the truth will have corresponding works. All will be earnest and solemn, and unwearied in their efforts to win souls to Christ. If the truth is first planted deep in their own souls, then they will seek to plant it in the hearts of others. The truth is kept altogether too much in the outer court. Bring it into the inner temple of the soul, enthrone it in the heart, and let it control the life. The word of God should be studied and obeyed, then the heart will find rest and peace and joy, and the aspirations will tend heavenward; but when truth is kept apart from the life, in the outer court, the heart is not warmed with the glowing fire of God's goodness.

The religion of Jesus is, by many, reserved for certain days, or certain occasions, and at other times is laid aside and neglected. The abiding principle of truth is not merely for a few hours on the Sabbath, or for a few acts of charity, but it is to be brought into the heart, refining and sanctifying the character. If there is a moment when man is safe without



this special light and strength from heaven, then he may dispense with the truth of God. The Bible, God's pure, holy word, must be his counselor and guide, the controlling power of his life. It gives forth its lessons to us if we will take them to heart.

Abraham was a man favored of God. The Lord said: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Abraham was honored of God because he cultivated home religion and caused the fear of the Lord to pervade his whole household. It is God who says: "I know him, that he will command"—there will be no betraying of sacred trust on his part, no yielding to anyone but God; there is a law, and Abraham will keep it; no blind affection will cloud his sense of right and interfere between God and the souls of his children; that kind of indulgence which is the veriest cruelty will not lead Abraham astray.

Parents and children alike belong to God to be ruled by Him. By affection and authority combined, Abraham ruled his house. God's word has given us rules for our guidance. These rules form the standard from which we cannot swerve if we would keep the way of the Lord. God's will must be paramount. The question for us to ask is not: What have others done? What will my relatives think? or, What will they say of me if I pursue this course? but, What has God said? Neither parent nor child can truly prosper in any course excepting in the way of the Lord.

The *American Union Newsletter* is the official organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement, American Union. It is published monthly, is complimentary for our members and friends, and carries items of interest submitted by church members. We reserve the right to make changes as necessary and to refuse to print certain items.

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