

Lessons from "The River Mouse"

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*I*f you've tried memorizing scripture lately, then you probably have found it to be more difficult than it looks. That's because the older we get, the harder it seems to become.

Not so with children. They memorize quickly and retain those verses forever that they've committed to memory. That's why having our students learn verses by memory is so important. They will never forget them.

Case in point: Emmie, a second grader in Mrs. Ayers' class.

Just last month all the second graders were given a creative writing assignment. They were given a page with a picture of a mouse sailing on a "leaf" boat down the river with a butterfly nearby. They were asked to write something that would go with the picture. Mrs. Ayers encouraged them to really get creative, and not simply write a few sentences that described the picture. She asked for a story.

Emmie knew exactly what she was going to write about because a verse she thought she could incorporate into her story came instantly to her mind. And so, her story, entitled, "The River Mouse" was written:

Once upon a time there lived a river mouse. His name was Matthew. He was named Matthew because he loved the Bible and his favorite scriptures were found in Matthew. But Matthew had a problem! He loved the Bible, but he didn't know who God was!

One day Matthew was sailing down the river on his leaf boat, when he met a butterfly. He asked the butterfly for directions to the waterfall for a drink. The butterfly says, "Turn right." Then the butterfly asked Matthew: "Do you know about God, the Holy One?" "No," said Matthew. "I shall tell you," the butterfly said. So she talked and talked. "Thank you!" said Matthew, "God is WONDERFUL . . . and now I will honor Him!"

*'Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying,
 "Truly, You are the Son of God."
 Matthew 14:33*

Yes, Emmie used Matthew 14:33 to tell her story. In the context of Matthew 14, Jesus has just walked on water and Peter has joined him on the waves. When they both get back into the boat, the rest of the disciples who had witnessed this miracle began to worship Christ. When Mrs. Ayers asked Emmie how she knew to use this verse, she simply replied: "I learned it in first grade!"

Lessons from "The River Mouse" - *continued from front*

Memorizing the Word is not just for kids. Aldous Huxley, who was not a follower of Christ, wrote this about memorization: "Each man's memory is his private literature." When you ponder that, you begin to realize that hiding God's word in your heart (and mind) is one of the most important things a Christian can do. Charles Swindoll writes, "I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture...No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified."

And so, Cornerstone kids like Emmie will memorize. And you can be sure they don't forget.

*"I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you."
Psalm 119:11*

God's Corner

We continue to celebrate together the amazing ways that God provides for us. November has been a wonderful giving month! One donor gave \$15,000, followed by another who gave \$10,000. And if that wasn't enough, still another sent \$20,000 with the prayer that the gift would be "used for His honor and glory . . . That you may continue bringing our young ones to Christ." That gift was followed with the donation of a backstop for our soon-to-be-finished ball diamond; a backstop with a price tag of over \$10,000.

We have been overwhelmed by God's goodness to us through donors. It's always such an encouragement to see others invest in the work at Cornerstone.

Matching Gift Received

And so when we received yet another gift, this time in the amount of \$50,000 last week, we were speechless! This gift we want to match with new monies by the end of the year—perhaps we can even triple that amount! Pray with us that God will continue to provide in big ways.

Small Ways, Too

While we love seeing God provide in these big ways, we also praise Him

when He works in small ways. We remember when . . .

The Basketball Rack

It was back in October of 2004. We had been in our building for almost a year, and were thankful for our new space. We even had a gym to host and play basketball games, and God had provided the basketballs. But what we didn't have was a basketball rack on wheels to put the balls on.

Soup Labels

Cornerstone students, parents, and grandparents had collected thousands of Campbell's Soup labels throughout the year. Day after day, students would bring in red and white labels from their favorite soups (chicken noodle seemed to always be the winner!) We collected them in a big plastic container in the school office, and once a week a parent volunteer would come to collect them. They would be counted and cut and sent off to Campbell's, where the points were tallied.

The process was repeated week after week until the exciting day came when we received our total point amount and the order catalog filled with all sorts of "school stuff." When the catalog arrived this particular year, we determined that the greatest need was in

our Athletic Department, so the order was placed for some playground balls, some soccer balls, and an electric air pump to fill them. After adding all the points up, we still had enough for a ball rack on wheels. We wanted the large rack that would hold over 20 balls, but were out of points. So, instead we ordered the rack that held 12 balls.

Short a Piece!

When the items arrived, the 3-tier wheeled ball rack was put together. Unfortunately, it was short a piece. It was missing one leg support, which made it very wobbly. Our guys took it apart and repacked it, intending to send it back and obtain a replacement. When the company was called, they told us that if it was the large ball rack it should be returned, but since it was the small one, the company wouldn't take a return, but instead would just send a new one to us.

Here's the amazing part of this story! When the new ball rack arrived and was put together, the box wasn't empty. At the bottom was found – you guessed it – an extra leg support! Coincidence? Of course not. God knew we needed ball racks, and saw to it that we would have two to make up for the large one we couldn't get.

The Music Stands

We had another story that was similar,

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Christian Schooling in a Postmodern Culture

Dr. Bill Brown, president of Cedarville University, past Cornerstone Founder's Banquet speaker and this year's Worldview Symposium speaker at Cornerstone has said,

A generation of young people is confronted with countless ideas, lifestyles, religions, values, and worldviews, and they have no context for critically examining them. Our culture presents all of them as "normal" and thus challenges any understanding of and commitment to a core set of beliefs.¹

He goes on to explain that at one time, many considered a Christian education a withdrawal from the culture. Now, however, it is becoming increasingly evident that Christian education is providing the most vigorous and complete instruction for our children.

Not Indoctrination

To begin with, it is not indoctrination, but true education in that it is free to investigate all issues from alternative worldviews because of its commitment to the discovery of truth.

Truth? That's right, truth. Today's students need a lifeline for truth. The postmodern culture we live in today is one which is marked by individualism where there is no such thing as objective truth. It has become the "for you" generation. The Bible is God's Word . . . "for you." Jesus is the only way to heaven . . . "for you." God exists . . . "for you." Truth for the postmodern teenager is what he or she can see through the lens of their own experience and existence.

Not Fragmented

Christian education is not fragmented, but comprehensive in that it helps students make connections between

academic studies and important life questions. Questions on origin (Where did everything come from?), morality (How do we decide what is right and wrong?), and destiny (Why are we here, and what happens when we die?) - questions central to the human experience are joined to the study and search for real truth. Students are prepared and motivated to think deeply about such things.²

Christian education aggressively takes on the culture in order to equip students for lifelong leadership and service. If you've been at Cornerstone at all recently, then you already know we're facing this culture war assertively. At the personal level, we hold up the importance of virtue and the development of character. Cornerstone teachers model integrity and love and are committed to teaching from a biblical worldview. At the public level, we provide students the knowledge and skills needed to engage the culture with the heart and mind of Christ.

Salt and Light?

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount that believers are to be "salt and light" in the world. We hear that sometimes in connection with sending Christian students into a public school setting. What's often overlooked however, is the context of Matthew 5. Jesus was speaking to His disciples—grown men who had been under His training and supervision. The medical doctor who became a follower of Christ wrote, "...everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). Christian students like non-Christian students, will become like their teachers. We would never think to send a young person to war with a few weeks of training, so why would

we ever think to place a young person who has still to mature in his or her faith under the teaching of one who is not like Christ? Add to that, a recent study on youth done by LifeWay Research revealed that 70% of born-again junior high students will have dropped out of church by the time they graduate high school.³

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Postmodernism must be confronted, not accommodated. We must challenge its false presuppositions, lovingly explaining that there is truth and that it is knowable.

With that in mind, the debate must never be about "Where should Christians send their children to school?" The debate needs to be about "How does God want Christians to educate their children?" It is not about "Christian" vs. "public" schools. It is about "biblical education" vs. "secular education."

With the stakes so high, the question remains: Is it really worth the sacrifice a family makes to send a student to Cornerstone Christian Academy?

We know it is. The results speak for themselves as we see our first graduates graduate from college well-prepared to face their future—knowing and embracing Christ, who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

¹ Brown, Dr. William, Cedarville University Torch (Fall, 2008), "Making Sense in the Truth of the Tempest", pg. 2.

² Brown, Dr. William, *Educational Perspectives*, ACS, 2006.

³ McDowell, Josh, *Levels of Adolescent Religious Behavior*, <http://www.josh.org/site/c.ddKD1MntEqG/b.4186681/apps/s/content.asp?ct=5613383>

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but it involved metal music stands. It was back in 2002, and we had just started our first band. Our band director at the time, Mr. Hart, had needed some music stands and he knew what to do. He prayed and asked God to give them to us.

Not too long after that, we were given a donation which was designated toward the purchase of two music stands. We were excited by God's swift answer and placed our order.

Wrong Order

When the music stands arrived, we discovered that the company had not shipped us two music stands after all, but two *cases* of music stands (12!). Of course we called and let them know of the mistake, but because the cost of shipping them back was so high, they told us just to keep the extra 10.

God had indeed provided again.

If you've kept up with our newsletters in the past, you know that God has provided high speed internet, a soccer field (with a winning soccer team!), grass seed, landscaping, and even the money to reseal our blacktop. He never ceases to provide for us.

The lessons we've learned? There have been many. We've learned that God loves to bless His children with good gifts, and He does this in ways we cannot foresee or understand. We also learn that God cares about the very simple things—things like basketball racks, and music stands; and He cares about bigger things—like the souls of kids who walk these halls every day.

And in the case of both of these, we remember that nothing—absolutely nothing is too hard for Him.

We Wait . . .

And so we wait to see what our great God is going to do next.

Maybe He will provide the monies needed to finish our high school addition; maybe He will pay off any remaining debt on our current building; maybe He will bring us yet more students next year. Who knows?

But in the meantime, we watch and wait with great anticipation, and we will tell His stories.

"The living, the living—they praise You, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about Your faithfulness."

Isaiah 38:19



Distinctive

E D U C A T I O N

Cornerstone Christian Academy does not discriminate against students of any gender, race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in its admission of educational policies or its scholarship, athletic or other school-administered programs.



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