

THE NEXT LIFESAVERS

We need to be realistic. We may only have an opportunity to be spiritually involved in the lives of our kids one hour a week – and that may be a good week! It is the parents who have the primary responsibility and opportunity to disciple the children that God has entrusted to them. We have the responsibility and opportunity to partner with those parents in the discipling process. “Partnering with Parents” will be the focus of our next issue of Lifesavers – share with us your perspectives on how we can work together with our families for the sake of God’s kids!

Please send your submissions to:
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(Please send ideas before January 15th so that we can include them in our February 2003 issue of Lifesavers.)

Lifesavers subscriptions are available!
Contact Canadian Ministries at
the National Ministry Centre
416-674-7878 ext. 230.

Back to the Basics

The Bible Basics is an in-depth Sunday class designed for the Grade 5’s of our church. As they review theology and the truths they have learned from God’s Word, they encounter a section that focuses on baptism. The kids learn what baptism is, where to find it in their Bibles, and what it symbolizes. Many of the kids in our church attend Catholic schools and this has helped them to understand the differences between infant baptism, child dedications, confirmations, first communion and adult baptisms. During class, the kids practice writing and telling their personal testimonies. Often after this teaching is done, we have children who wish to be baptized. Of course, personal interviews at the ice-cream shop are a highlight! As we explore the child’s understanding, it provides an opportunity to remind both them and myself why it is critical that we get back to the basics!

Tina Kish, Rosewood Park Alliance Church,
Regina, Saskatchewan



PLUNGING INTO A DEEPER LIFE WITH JESUS

My heart for kids in our small groups at Beulah Alliance is to see them loved unconditionally and growing into healthy, vibrant Christ followers. We don’t want our kids to be satisfied with the pat “Christianeze” answers, so our conversations are meant to probe matters of the heart as we listen to understand what moves them to want to love Jesus more and to do what is right. Our passion to disciple kids and see them plunge into a deeper life with Jesus led me to develop a plan to teach them about following Jesus in the step of baptism.

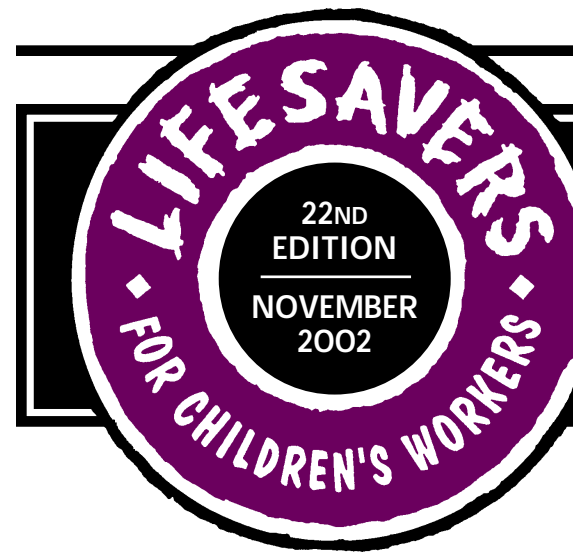
The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of our kids! If a boy or girl is enquiring about being baptized, parents are asked to contact me so that together we can talk about the readiness of their child for this important decision. Because we believe in the importance of this step in a child’s spiritual journey, our program involves two classes of no more than four children followed by individual interviews.

The first class focuses on salvation and each child’s experience of coming to Christ. The second class deals specifically with the meaning of baptism – what it is and what it is not. Often children believe that baptism is necessary in order to get into heaven. They need to learn that it is a symbol to show their friends and family how much they love Jesus. We search Scripture to answer questions and many of our conversations present huge opportunities to talk about deeper spiritual issues. Throughout this process, I pray that God will make me sensitive to His Holy Spirit and His work in the lives of each of these kids.

In the personal interview I have with each child, I ask them several questions that help them to articulate their understanding of what a Christian is and the commitment they have made. I tape our conversation and give them a copy as a memento. We then take time to write out their testimony for the actual baptism service. I ensure that it includes when and where they were saved and with who, what Jesus means to them now, why they want to be baptized and a Bible verse that has special meaning for them. After the interview, I take them on a ‘tour’ of the baptistery and we actually go in the tank and demonstrate to them what will happen. The children are encouraged to invite their friends and family and we ensure that the child’s small group and their shepherd attends their baptism to cheer them on as they plunge deep!

For more information on baptism at Beulah, contact Lois at lzapf@beulah.ca or call her at (780) 486-4010, ext. 340.

Lois Zapf, Beulah Alliance Church, Edmonton, AB



Baptism & Communion



PRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL CHURCH
EDUCATION COMMITTEE - CHILDREN'S DIVISION

AT YOUR SERVICE

WE want to be at your service! If you find you have any questions or concerns about ministering to children, or about the National Church Education Committee - Children’s Division, please don’t hesitate to give us a call.

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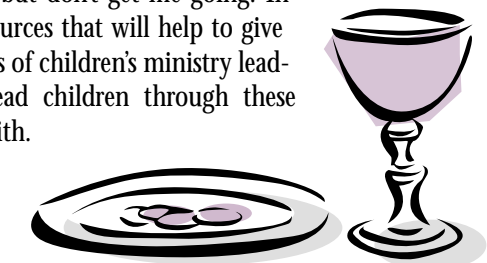
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The questions can’t be easily answered as a parent passes you in the hallway. “My child wants to take communion – what is the right age?” “My son constantly asks me if he can be baptized – is that allowed?” The issues of children and baptism and communion are myriad and need to be given careful thought and consideration. I have some opinions and some pet peeves in this arena (like baptismal testimonies that say they accepted Christ as a child, but that it didn’t really mean anything!), but don’t get me going. In this issue, you will be directed to resources that will help to give you direction, and you will hear stories of children’s ministry leaders and their experiences as they lead children through these important steps of discipleship and faith.

- Carol Wiebe, Chair



Mission Possible

We think the mission is possible! Our mission is to set up Coaching Connections (one-on-one) or Coaching Clusters (groups of three to five) to offer support to children’s ministry leaders across Canada. Weekend Walkabouts may also be coming to a district near you where you have the opportunity to ‘walkabout’ a children’s ministry for a weekend to see what you can walk away with!

The Canadian Midwest District conducted a mentoring program workshop where they gave out gifts to both mentors and mentorees alike. The mentors received the book, “Connecting – The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life,” while the mentorees received a pre-paid phone card to help them save on some of those calls they will inevitably be making to their mentors!

A Weekend Walkabout was held last year in Sherwood Park and another one held in the Eastern Canadian District – we’re not sure who had more fun – the children’s leaders attending or the children’s leaders who hosted the events!

