



What We Learn in Sunday School Really Matters!

by Sharon Ellard

An Old Person's Prayer: "God, you have taught me since I was young. Even until today, I tell about the miracles you do. Even though I am old and gray, do not leave me, God. I will tell the children about your power. I will tell those who will live after me about your might" (Psalm 71:17,18, International Children's Bible).

Teaching Faith

It may seem odd to include "An Old Person's Prayer" in a children's ministries article. But, take it from me, life flies by. Tomorrow those fifth graders will be fifty. I know. I'm 53, but just last Sunday, I was ten and sitting on a wooden folding chair with four or five other girls, learning the Ten Commandments and wondering if I would ever in a million years marry anyone in the boys' Sunday School class next door.

Teaching Sunday School was an act of faith and obedience for Mrs. Nichols, my junior teacher. She would never have imagined that the girl with the sagging pony tail would grow up to write and edit Sunday School lessons for children.

I'm thankful for Pentecostal teachers and Sunday School curriculum. My teachers couldn't

know (for sure) how the Bible lessons would be used throughout my life, but they taught me how to use the Bible and how to depend on it during wars like Vietnam, scandals like Watergate, and tragedies like 9/11. Those volunteers who prepared lessons from Pentecostal teacher guides every week prepared me to face life with faith and hope in the power of God through the Holy Spirit.



Teaching Mosaics

Children today are sometimes called *Mosaics* because they live in a culture that pieces together so many different worldviews. The Mosaic Generation is growing up with friends who may

worship Allah, Vishnu, or no god. They attend schools that sometimes teach evolution, witchcraft, or "alternative lifestyles." All of these cultural changes make it more important than ever that children learn all of the Bible, believe what it says, and understand how to live it and how to share it with friends.

It's not just the multi-cultural nature of the U.S. that makes learning the Bible essential. It's also the traits of Mosaics themselves. The children of the church today are growing up in a culture that questions absolutes. Mosaics need to know how to tell why they believe Jesus is the only way to God. They need to know how to talk about the importance of obeying God's absolute commands.

The kind of curriculum children study does make a difference. According to statistics from George Barna, the Assemblies of God has done well at teaching biblical truth to Boomers and Busters. Among A/G adults, 81 percent believe that life in heaven is based solely on confessing sins and accepting Jesus as Savior. That compares to only 30 percent who believe in salvation by grace in another mainline denomination.

Barna evaluated other faith-related subjects. Again, for

Boomers and Busters, Assemblies of God teachers and curriculum have effectively taught biblical beliefs.

The Bible is totally accurate—80 percent A/G agree compared to 41 percent general population.

Evangelism is our personal responsibility—73 percent A/G; others, 32 percent.

God is our all-powerful, all-knowing, Creator, who still rules today—96 percent A/G; others, 70 percent.

Radiant Life

I am thankful that Boomers/Busters grew up with

Radiant Life. Its quarterlies, take-home papers, and visuals shaped what we believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible. The lessons challenged us to include what we learned at Sunday School in our everyday lives.

I believe that today's generation of kids, the Mosaics, need *Radiant Life* more than Boomers or Busters. Mosaics must know:

 God wants the unchanging truth of the Bible to guide and protect them.

 God loves them and has plans for their lives.

 Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died to save them.

 The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers them for ministry.

 Jesus Christ can heal them.

 Jesus will return for them.

Radiant Life offers lessons that teach Bible truths at every age, from Babies through Preteens. These lessons promote life-change based on the truth of the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mosaics need what *Radiant Life* offers—so does our world.

To learn more about *Radiant Life*, visit www.radiantlife.org, or request a free *Radiant Life* Theme Chart (75-2339).

Questions for Further Study—

1. What are Mosaic children?
2. What are some of the foundational beliefs that Mosaics need to know?
3. What are some cultural issues your students face that can be viewed as a ministry opportunities for them?



This article is reprinted from the Winter 2002 issue of *Fanning the Flame*, a quarterly newsletter for children's workers produced by the National Children's Ministries Agency. *Fanning the Flame* is mailed free to children's pastors and directors in the local church. For additional copies and back issues contact GPH at 1-800-641-4310.