

The Answer is Jesus

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A Sunday school teacher leads a classroom full of children asking them the question, "Who can tell me the name of an animal that is also referred to as a canine?" There is silence from the class. Once more the teacher explains, "This animal likes to bark... A famous one is Snoopy." Still silence. Then one child timidly raises her hand. "Yes, Suzy?" the teacher excitedly exclaims. "Well, Mrs. Smith," she answers "I know the answer is Jesus but it sure sounds a lot like a dog."

On Sunday morning you will most likely see CCC children on their way to Sunday school. You may see them hovering at the snack table needing a reminder to go to class; chasing one another down the hallway towards their classrooms in excitement or slowly walking to their rooms, clinging to their parents. Each Sunday, our Children's Ministry ministers to over 60 children either through Nursery, Sunday school classes or Children's Worship. The purpose of our ministry is to come alongside parents as children learn of the love of Christ. But, how do we attempt to do this each week? How do we help them to see that Jesus is more than just an answer to a Sunday school lesson? ... that they are designed for a relationship with him? ... that His power is for them to embrace in their daily lives? ... that His riches do connect to their realities?

It may seem like a daunting task to have 10-12 children looking up at you on Sunday morning expecting to be taught. Fortunately, as teachers we have God's Word to reveal to us what our children need and to help shape and direct our teaching. This year as teachers, we studied this passage in Ezekiel—the promise of the new covenant in Christ:

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."
Ezekiel 36:25-27

Here, God teaches us that all of us, including our children, need a radical and thorough change: We need a new heart! And God is the one who gives it. It is not up to us as teachers to change a child's heart. God wonderfully chooses us (maybe you!) as instruments for Him. Because God is the great "Heart-Changer," we can rest assured that he is working through the Bible lessons, crafts, singing and prayer time. He is teaching our children who He is, what He promises in Christ, and what it looks like to follow Him.

As the children begin to understand this truth, they can begin to embrace more personally who Christ is, how much they do indeed need Him in their lives, and how he is working by his Spirit to transform them for His purposes.

So how does this truth affect our Sunday school classes? Sunday school now becomes more than a place to learn that Jesus is the safest answer for most Sunday school questions. Sunday school becomes a place where teachers create their lessons, guide their prayer times, engage in conversations all focused around the truth that Jesus is the one these children truly need. He can cleanse them. He can change their hearts and He can empower them to follow His commands. He is the perfect answer!