

Spring Issue

TEACHING OBEDIENCE, DISCIPLESHIP, AND AGAPE TO YOUTH

2001

FOR CHURCH, HOME, AND SCHOOL

**Is God Real To You -
And Your Children?**

By Rory Ries



This article was initially going to address the relationship between our children and God and yet, it seems to be very appropriate for all ages, both young and old. The question for all is, "Is God real to you?"

Is it possible we can attend church, attend bible studies, attend Sabbath School, and yet, not really know God? We're going to take a good look at this question and the question which we asked at the very beginning of this article.

Let's begin in Ex. 3 and we can see how God introduces Himself to Moses. God then instructs Moses on what He wants Moses to do. During this meeting, Moses asks the question in verse 13, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God replies, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

We can also read in Ex. 19 where God comes down to Mount Sinai to meet with His people. In both incidents, we can see how God is wanting a relationship with the people that He has chosen, even though they may not even know who He is.

It's not much different today, that is, God wanting a relationship with the people He chooses. Also, God is wanting a relationship with both, the young and old. Not only with just the parents, but also with their children.

So, how does God become real to us? He is not going to come down to Mount Sinai and meet us, not at this time anyway. Chances are, He is not going to appear in a burning bush either.

We do know that God calls out those whom He chooses. (John 6:44 and 45) We also know we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:18-20) Along with being reconciled to God we are instructed to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 3:18)

As we grow and develop in Christ, He and the Eternal God become real to us.

This growing and development doesn't always just happen overnight. God doesn't always use a magical wand to change us or change the way we think. We have to put forth effort by studying His word and putting it into practice. We also have to pray continually and fast at times.

Sometimes there is pain with growth and understanding God. We may have to go through some difficult trials and some may last for awhile. After all that Job had suffered, his reply to God was, "My ears have heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you." (Job 42:5)

As we come to see God and become more like Him, we are to pass these things onto our children. Our children have to see the changes that Christ is bringing about in our lives. Our faith and belief has to be true. They have to see, with their own eyes, the loving relationship we have with God and how we love our fellow man.

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Personal Note



We hope you enjoy this Spring issue. We have included an article "Is God Real to You - and Your Children" by Rory Ries. (Rory is a youth counselor and therapist and works with troubled youth in and around the St. Louis area.)

I was very privileged to sit down with Karen Gregory at the Feast last year and she allowed me to interview her about what life is like being disabled and in a wheel chair. (See Karen's Story). There is also an article "Set the Proper Example" and poem that relates to this called "When you thought I Wasn't Looking", which came to me over the Internet.

We also have included more pictures and Feast reports from Feast 2000. There is an insert with Puzzle Pages regarding the Passover, The Last Supper and Pentecost. These are reproducible and came from one of the resources featured in "The Resource Corner" of this issue.

Be sure and read "The Resource Corner", a new addition to TODAY. We are looking forward to hearing from you

about any resources you use; and if you would like to include a review of any books, lessons, etc. that would be helpful to parents and teachers we would gladly print it in the Resource column. We need your input in making this a success and it gives you an opportunity to share your resources with others.

If you would like to become a contributor to the TODAY Newsletter, please send your articles, ideas, and crafts to Shelby Faith, P.O.Box 183, High Ridge, Mo. 63049, or you may email me at: sfaith@mindspring.com. If you know of anyone who would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please send me their name and address and we will add them to our mailing list.

Please let us know how we can serve you better. What would you like to see in TODAY - more articles, crafts, lesson samples? Help us to make this your newsletter. Thank you for your continuing interest and support.

Shelby Faith



Letters From Our Readers

Dear Shelby, We have received your T.O.D.A.Y. for about the past two years. We really enjoy the helpful suggestions you have for parents. Since my husband and I are first generation Christians, we really appreciate all the help we can find with regards to helping our children develop a love for and knowledge of God. Thanks for the job you are doing for the work of the Lord. Kim Vander Poel, Hardwick, MN

OUR NEW CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please send any ideas, suggestions, resources, articles, crafts, contributing materials, letters, comments, etc. regarding TODAY to me at my address: Shelby Faith, P.O. Box 183, High Ridge, MO 63049

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS: sfaith@mindspring.com



KAREN'S STORY

By Shelby Faith

Karen Gregory

(The following article is based on an interview with Karen Gregory during the Feast of Tabernacles at Wagner, OK, this year. I have noticed that some adults and children don't always know how to respond when they see a disabled person, they don't know what that person is thinking and they tend to ignore them totally or say hi and look the other way. We need to know how that person wants to be treated and we need to teach our children how to respond when they see someone in a wheelchair or disabled in some way. Karen graciously granted me time to sit down with her and ask her how she feels and what it's like to be disabled. Karen has a progressive disease called Friedreich's Ataxia, which attacks the peripheral nervous system. Karen grew up in the Church of God and her parents, Lawrence and Janice Gregory, were present during the interview. Lawrence Gregory is the pastor of The Tulsa Church of God.)



Karen's background as explained by her parents: Karen was born with a genetic disease called Friedreich's Ataxia. The doctors told Mr. and Mrs. Gregory that most children with this disease only live for about 15 years. Karen was a pretty normal child until about 10 years of age, and then she developed heart problems. Karen was still able to run and play like other children. At the age of 13 Karen had to start using a walker. She went to a public school through the 8th grade, and in high school she went to a special education class with others that had disabilities. By this time she was confined to a wheelchair. Her parents stated that it was a blessing for Karen to go to special education class because she was with other people with disabilities and had teachers who understood how to teach handicapped students.

Karen said, "I felt better and was more relaxed (in the special education class). The teachers and classmates were nice and I only had to attend one class room all day. In public school other kids just stared at me and didn't help much. Teenagers in the church always treated me normal, but I felt left out because I wasn't able to do a lot of the activities.

I asked Karen, "What's it like to be disabled and in a wheelchair?" She answered, "I didn't know I was disabled until I was about 13 years old. I was able to walk and run, but when I was 13, I had to start using a walker. I used a wheelchair mostly

high school. I graduated from high school. I could have gone to college but I didn't want to. It was too hard to get up and get ready, and I wanted to sleep in."

I then asked Karen how do people treat her when they see her in a wheelchair. In her own words she explained, "People don't know how to communicate with someone in a wheelchair. People should realize that not everybody is normal. One time a new caregiver came up to me and talked to me like I was a little child, so I answered her like I was a little crazy." (Karen laughed as she remembered this incident.) Some of her caregivers don't always know or understand Karen's situation.

Her father commented that Karen has had dozens of different caregivers, some for only a couple of hours, some a few days, and some for a few weeks. "Some people treat me as being mentally disabled because I'm in a wheelchair. Sometimes I just sit in my wheelchair and people pass me by, but I now understand why people do that. People sometimes accidentally hit my feet or legs when they're close to me. They think I don't have any feelings there, but I do." (Karen is not paralyzed and has feelings in her legs, feet and hands but she now is having coordination problems.) "When I get frustrated I just let out a moan or a groan. People should imagine what it's like to be in a wheelchair. I wish other adults would treat me as an adult. I really like kids. They will come up close to me".

My next question to Karen was "What's it like growing up in the church?" "Being born into the church was great and I've gotten to meet lots of people. It was difficult to explain about going to church on Saturday. I didn't understand then what I do now. I always enjoyed the Feast as a kid. It's like going as one big family. Mom and Dad were always teaching me. It was easier for me. As a teenager I didn't have to struggle with religion. It was just normal. I was baptized about 8 years ago. It just came natural. My parents were always talking about their beliefs and teaching me. I felt better after baptism and was now in the eyes of the Lord. I'm more relaxed and it's a very good feeling. Being handicapped in the church is more relaxing and people come up and talk to me." (During the whole time I was interviewing Karen, she was never critical of her church family. She indicated that people in the church were always very understanding, supportive and helpful to her and her family.)

At this time Karen's mom commented that Karen has more problems communicating now. Karen has lost a lot of her hearing but her mom is usually close by and helps translate for her. Karen lip reads and with the help of her mother was able to understand me very well. Karen's mom also explained that Karen's biggest problem when she first became disabled was learning how to get used to being disabled, and she has had to learn how to do things differently as the disease progresses. "Karen dreams normal dreams like the rest of us. In her dreams she isn't handicapped. She walks and runs like everyone else."

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(Continued from Page 3)

Karen then commented that she has never been able to work. "I'm on disability from Social Security. It's becoming harder and harder for me. I tend to want to sleep a lot. But there is more help for the handicapped now." Karen's father interjected that there is now more help for disabled people. "Karen is 100% handicapped. She takes a lot of expensive medication. It's a blessing for people to know that there is financial assistance to help out, state and federal."

Anyone that has ever met Karen remembers her for her beautiful bright smile. I remarked to her that she always has a big smile on her face. "Mom and Dad said when I was born I had a big smile on my face", she responded.

Near the end of our conversation I asked Karen why she thought she has been allowed to live long past the 15 years the doctors allotted her. With that beautiful big smile, she answered, "I should have died around 16 years of age, but I'm 32 now. God has blessed me."

The purpose of this article is to let people know what it's like to be handicapped, or in a wheelchair, and how does that person want to be treated. Karen, and others like her, doesn't want sympathy. She understands that it's difficult for some people to know what to say to a disabled person. She doesn't want to be treated as an invisible person, avoided entirely, or stared at. She doesn't want to be talked down to, or treated as mentally disabled. If you accidentally step on her feet or bump up against her, just apologize. If you meet her or another disabled person like her, smile. If someone is in a wheelchair and you would like to converse with them, it would help if you can find a place to sit down and talk with them at eye level. Treat disabled people like you want to be treated. Acknowledge them with a "Hello, good to see you, how are you?", or just smile to them. I'm sure that most disabled people are like Karen; they enjoy a good smile anytime. In fact, all of us need a good smile in our direction every so often!

As parents and teachers, we need to explain that disabled people are just like you and me, with normal feelings, thoughts and desires. Usually children realize this, and don't have too much problem communicating. It's us adults that seem to have a problem. Maybe we need to imitate our children in this respect and not hold back the impulse to go up to a disabled person and just start talking. Most children are very comfortable talking to the disabled, the elderly and just about anyone. Encourage your children to do this often, and let us adults learn from them.

(A special thanks to Karen and her parents for allowing me the time to sit down with them for this article, and ask them some intimate questions regarding Karen's disability.)



SET THE PROPER EXAMPLE

By Shelby Faith



From the time our children are born they are watching us, their parents. They learn from us by copying us; how to talk, walk, eat, express themselves, etc.

They form opinions, make decisions, react physically and emotionally, based on how they see their parents handle situations in life. We've all seen the little boy walking with his father. He imitates his father in his walking, hands in pockets just like his Dad. Little girls imitate their mothers, and at a very young age play at putting on make-up, dressing up, etc.

Children usually like and dislike the same things their parents do. My little 8 year old granddaughter will not eat bread crust because her mother does not eat bread crust. She tears off the crust just the same way her mother does.

When our children are very young, they are programmed to learn from their parents. As they get older, they watch their peers and sometimes imitate their peers' actions, whether good or bad. Just as they copy us when they are young, they later will imitate their peers to some degree. That is why it is so important to teach and train your children when they are young, while you still have influence in their lives. Help them to learn to be kind, help those who are in need, speak well of others, show respect and share; don't lie, cheat, steal or speak evil things and don't set a bad example for them in your conduct.

This is especially true for children whose parents are in the Church of God. If the parents act differently at church than they do at home, the children will follow their example. If you are constantly bickering, hollering, making a big commotion about little things in life your children will learn that this is acceptable behavior within your family. A problem arises when children start to behave the same way, and then it spreads outside the home, and becomes a bigger problem. Parents wonder why their children misbehave sometimes when they're out in public, in school, etc. Think about it! Children learn this behavior at home most of the time, and don't understand that it is permissible at home, but not in public. It should never be permissible, but the training and teaching has to start with the parents. Don't allow your children to learn bad behavior, deceit, bickering, hypocrisy and disrespect from you.

Set the proper example for your children. Teach your children the fruits of the Holy Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23) by your example. Otherwise they will learn the fruits of the flesh;

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THE LAST SUPPER

Find the hidden words

B	A	S	I	N	K	N	I	R	D	J	Z
Y	Q	A	P	O	S	T	L	E	S	B	X
M	C	V	F	D	J	Y	G	H	L	T	C
X	S	W	A	J	U	U	S	E	B	S	G
S	D	E	T	R	R	A	S	L	I	F	Q
W	R	S	B	W	W	S	O	N	Y	C	M
B	P	U	C	A	E	O	S	J	F	Z	U
L	E	E	D	D	D	K	T	A	E	G	I

APOSTLES DRINK

BLESSED

BLOOD

EAT

SINS

EAT

BASIN

CUP

WASH



THE PASSOVER

Find the hidden words



LORD

FLOCKS

MOSES

BLOOD

AARON

HOUSE

PLAGUE

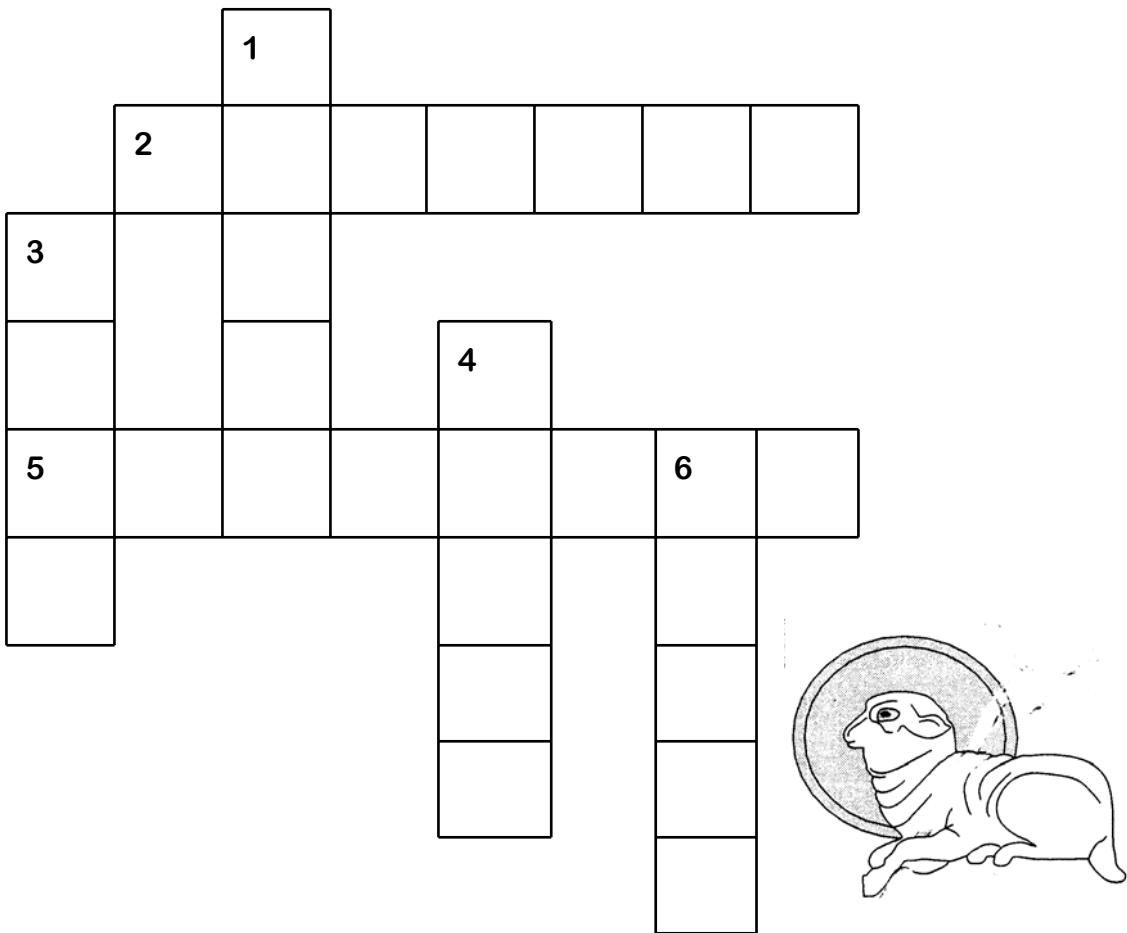
PASSOVER

TENTH

EGYPT

THE PASSOVER

Hint: You'll find help in Exodus 12 - 15



ACROSS

2 The Israelites had been held in _____

5 The Lord struck down all the firstborn at _____

DOWN

1 _____ was put on the doorposts of the houses

3 All the Israelites took a perfect _____ from their flocks and killed it

4 The Israelites had to leave their houses before their dough was _____

6 Death passed over a _____ with blood over the door

PENTECOST

The words below are taken from Acts 2, where we read the story of Pentecost.
Circle the words as you find them in the puzzle

P P R O S E L Y T E S A S S W
T A T N E P E R C Y R E N E I
H M E S O P O T A M I A A U N
O P E T E R E Y P I I T I G D
U H S S D F B L P B G P H N E
S Y G A L I L E A N S Y T O Z
A L V O L R V R D M N G R T I
N I J U D E A J O E I E A H T
D A R P E N T E C O S T P X P
R P O N T U S W I T H R E E A
O R O M E D E S A I S A X S B
L E G A U G N A L S E T E R C

PENTECOST
GALILEANS
MEDES
MESOPOTAMIA
CAPPADOCIA
ASIA
PAMPHYLIA
LIBYA
ROME
PROSELYTES
ARABIANS

LANGUAGE
PARTHIANS
ELAMITES
JUDEA
PONTUS
PHRYGIA
EGYPT
CYRENE
JEWS
CRETES
DAVID

LORD
WIND
TONGUES
FIRE
REPENT
BAPTIZED
SINS
PETER
THREE
THOUSAND



MORE FEAST SABBATH SCHOOL REPORTS - 2000

Western Hills, Wagoner, OK



Wagoner, OK

SS Children performing on
Youth Day

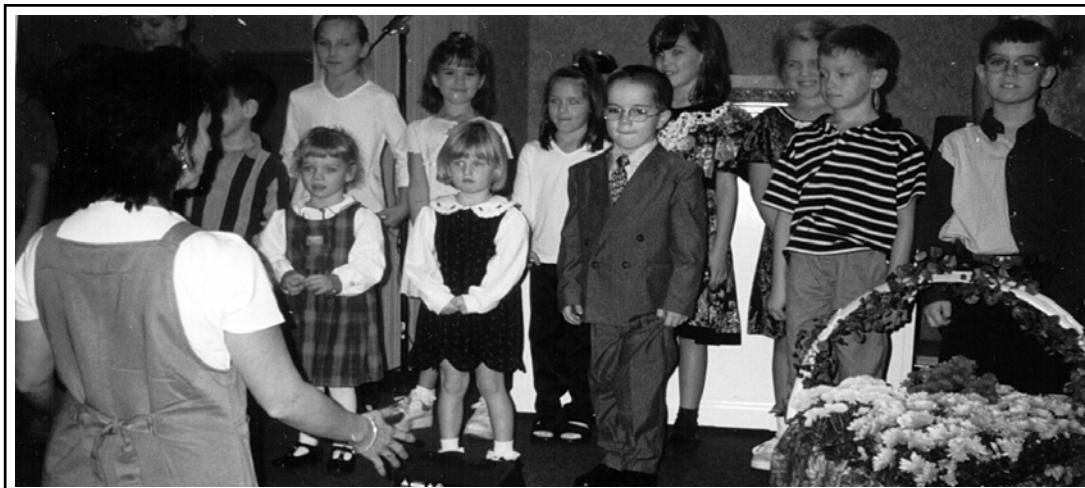
(Picture by Beth Riley)

Lake Ozark, MO

Teacher: Mindy Day

Children: Charlie and Dakota Sliger,

And Emily Day



Sevierville

Children's Choir

Vicki Calvert,
Directing

"WHEN YOU THOUGHT I WASN'T LOOKING"

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator,
And I immediately wanted to paint another one.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned,
That it was good to be kind to animals.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned,
That little things can be the special things in life.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick,
And I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing,
And I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I felt you kiss me good night,
And I felt loved and safe.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it,
And I learned we have to take care of what we are given.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw how you handled your responsibilities even when you didn't feel good,
And I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.



When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that
Sometimes things hurt, but it's alright to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw that you cared and I wanted to be
Everything that I could be.



When you thought I wasn't looking, I watched you,
I learned that most of life's lessons that I needed to know,
To be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I heard you pray, and I knew that there is a God
That I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.



When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say,
"Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking". (Anonymous)

(Continued from Page 1)

Is God Real To You ...

Our children have to take part in our prayer life and our study life. We have to help them feel they are a part of our church life, by including them and keeping them involved with the congregation. The church also has to be committed in assisting these children in a joint effort with the parents, that they may see that God is a family.

So many children become as their parents are because they see and feel the love their parents have for what they are doing. Children become athletes like their parents, or take over the family business because of what has been passed on to them by their parents.

If God is real to us then, chances are, He will be real to them. He will not be just a figment of our own imagination. Our children may not always respond to their calling as we would like or when we would like them to, but if they see Christ living in us, that is something that will stick with them forever. The example we set and the knowledge we pass on will never leave them.



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SET THE PROPER EXAMPLE

adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like (Gal. 5:19-21). Teach them the good things in life while they are young so that they may grow up and teach their children the good things also, following the example that was taught to them when they were just learning to walk, talk and imitating you, their loving parents. May God bless all of you in efforts to set the right example for your children.

(Be sure and read "When You Thought I Wasn't looking" in this issue, passed along to me through the Internet by an anonymous contributor.)



Israel's 12 Tribes

Genesis 29 and 30

- **What each name means**
- **Who the mother was**
- (In order of the eldest first)**

Reuben—"Behold a Son"

Leah—"Weary"

Simeon—"Hearing"

Leah

Levi—"Joiner"

Leah

Judah—"Praise"

Leah

Dan—"Judge"

Bilhah—"Bashful" (Rachel's maid)

Naphtali—"My Wrestling"

Bilhah

Gad—"Troop" ("Victory")

Zilpah—"Myrrh dropping" (Leah's maid)

Asher—"Happy"

Zilpah

Issachar—"Wages"

Leah

Zebulon—"Dwelling"

Leah

Joseph—"May He Add"

Rachel

Benjamin—"Son of My Right Hand"

Rachel—"Lamb"

Jacob's daughter—Dinah—"Judgment"

Leah

Joseph's 2 sons—Ephraim—"Fruitful"
—Manasseh—"Forgetful"

Asenath (daughter of Poti-pherah of On)

*Israel was composed of northern 10 tribes.
Judah (Jews), Benjamin, and high priests
of Levi were in the south.*

YNCA, POB 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262

THE RESOURCE CORNER



Thanks for responding to my request for resources that you have found and are using to teach your children, and thanks for sharing these resources with others. Please continue to send me any books, lessons, crafts and web sites that would be helpful to parents and teachers. Following is a list of books that can be ordered or found in book stores:

THE BIG BOOK OF BIBLE PUZZLES

Published by Paradise Press, Inc., 1575 Northpark Dr. #100, Weston, Fl. 33326

Review: Contains crossword puzzles, code and hidden name puzzles (age group 7 - 12). Can be purchased at discount stores such as "Dollar Stores" for \$1.00.

LITTLE HANDS CAN TOO

Published by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118

Review: 37 fun craft projects for bible school and home school including crafts for Old and New Testament stories, using easy-to-find materials (age group 3 - 8). Can be purchased at Christian Book Stores.

NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE ACTIVITIES

Published by Rainbow Publishers, Div. Of Success with Youth, P.O. Box 261129, San Diego, CA. 92126

Review: A collection of activities for children ages 8 - 14, based on New Testament. Can be used for group or individual students and can be reproduced for class use. (Sold at Christian Book stores.)

BIBLE LESSONS & ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS

Published by Accent Publications, P.O. Box 15337, Denver, Co., 80215.

Review: Booklets contain 12-13 week lessons, activities and Bible verses. A nominal fee is charged for each booklet. (Write to Accent at the above address and ask for free sample booklets for all age groups.)



WEB SITES WITH LESSONS AND RESOURCES,

Check out the following web sites for available resources, crafts, lessons, etc.:

www.ucgyouth.org The United Church of God, An International Association

Review: This web site contains a magazine for youth, available lessons and activities, teen guides, and other information geared toward our youth. Check it out also for information on youth camps and activities.

<p style="text-align: center;">T.O.D.A.Y. NEWSLETTER <i>A Quarterly Publication by:</i> Churches of GOD Outreach Ministries P.O. Box 54621, Tulsa, OK. 74155-0621</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">T.O.D.A.Y. CONTRIBUTORS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">YOU!!</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Shelby Faith</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Rory Ries</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> <p>Production and Layout Matt Hellwege & Linda Smith</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">HANDLING AND MAILING</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Rick Gawith Brian Gawith</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Sherry Gawith Matt Gawith</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" Proverbs 17:6</i></p>	<p>Shelby Faith</p>	<p>Rory Ries</p>	<p>Production and Layout Matt Hellwege & Linda Smith</p>		<p>Rick Gawith Brian Gawith</p>	<p>Sherry Gawith Matt Gawith</p>	
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