

# THE ROMANS ROAD FOR CHILDREN

## Session 5: The Truths About the Appropriation

In a study conducted by Pollster, George Barna, it was reported by 43% of Americans that it doesn't matter what religious faith you follow, because they all teach the same lessons. 54% of Americans disagree. Half of Americans, 50% believe that all people are eventually saved or accepted by God no matter what they do, while 40% disagreed. Worse yet, 22% believe that Jesus committed sins just like the rest of us while He was here on earth. In some of these cases some of the people who said they believed these things considered themselves to be born again Christians; this is a very frightening thought. If this is what some adult Christians believe, what is being taught to the children?

John Dyer, Poet turner clergyman in England once said, *"A man may go to Heaven without health, without riches, without honors, without learning, without friends; but he can never go there without Christ."* Jon Dyer. Acts 4:12 tells us, *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (KJV) God's word clearly teaches us that the only way to God is through believing in the lord Jesus Christ, it is because of His life, death and His resurrection that we can be saved.

In previous classes we have looked at what a child needs to understand in order to be saved, he needs to understand that God, the perfect creator loves him. The child must recognize that he is a sinner and can do nothing to save himself, and that God loved him so much that He allowed His own Son Jesus to die for his sins. Once the boys and girls understand these truths they are ready to believe on Jesus as their own personal Savior from sin, and the one who can allow them to live life with God. A word of caution here, I've talked with a number of individuals during my years in ministry who did not know that Jesus could be their Savior. Some of these people grew up in church, they heard the Gospel over and over again, but no one told them they had to take the gift of salvation as their own. As a result, it was not until their teen or adult or years that they made a salvation decision. We don't want to be guilty of that same mistake.

So once you have clearly shared the message of salvation, give the children an opportunity to respond to it. How do you do this? In the next several minutes we will look at the steps you need to take to invite the child to respond to the Gospel message just taught. To begin this process you will start with Romans 10:13. After giving your link statement from Romans 5:8 "have you believed on Him?" and showing the flashcard number 5, Romans 10:13, you want to read the verse from your Bible. Starting directly with the verse will help you keep focused on the invitation God gives to the child. It will give you direction and help to keep you from stumbling in giving your explanation.

Romans 10:13 is a verse that we in CEF call a condition, promise verse. This is a verse that tells us what we must do as well as what God promises to do in return. Let's read the verse together now. As I

read the verse, notice the phrases or concepts that will need to be explained. Romans 10:13 says this, *“for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (KJV)* Although this is a short verse and it seems self-explanatory to us, we need to break it down for the children. There are three words or phrases that need to be explained. First of all, *“whosoever”* is anyone; it’s you, if you call. You want to make it personal to the child. Emphasize with the child that calling on God for salvation is a very serious decision that only he or she can make. Secondly, explain, *“Calls on the name of the Lord”* remember that children think literally. How do we explain *“call on the name of the Lord”*? It is not by saying, “Hey God!” Calling in children’s language simply means believing or putting your trust in the Lord, in Jesus alone. You are recognizing that He is the only one that can forgive you and save you from sins punishment.

It is helpful to remind that child about his sin. This concept was taught in detail during the Romans Road presentation, so it’s not necessary to reteach the information here. Sometimes I use a question or a series of questions to remind the child of his sin. Questions like these, “Do you know that you are a sinner? Are you ready to turn from your sin to God and live His way?” Other times I may use a statement, “Today you learned that you are a sinner and that God punishes sin.” Briefly remind the child about his sin. Help the child understand that calling on God means believing on Him, you might say something like, “Calling on God means you believe Jesus died for your sins, taking the punishment you deserved.” Again, this could be said in a statement or question form to remind the child of what he or she must believe. Sometime a combination might be used, for example, “You need to believe that Jesus died to take the punishment you deserve for your sin. Do you believe that?” This only needs to be a reminder because the complete teaching about Jesus was done in the presentation a few minutes prior to this explanation.

Use the concept *“call”* found in Romans 10:13. Using the terms found in the passage will help keep you from confusing the children. If at this point you begin to talk about being a child of God, or asking Jesus into your heart or having everlasting life, terms that we use interchangeably in Christian circles, you will need to take additional time to explain those words. It is best to keep the concepts introduced in the verse to keep the explanation simple. Thirdly, help the child understand what God will do in response to his or her trust in Him. In this case you will need to explain the word, *“saved”*.

Sometimes I have heard people try to explain the word saved to children by comparing it to being saved from drowning. Most often this takes the Teacher off into a tangent because they have to explain the word picture. It is always easier to simply explain what the word saved means in the context. It could be done like this, “When you believe on Jesus, He will save you from the eternal punishment of separation from God that you deserve. He will save you from having to live life on your own and will help you to live life with God. When you’re saved, God by His Holy Spirit comes to live in the real you where you make your choices and where you feel happy and sad. While you live on earth He will help you to learn about God so that you are free from the power of sin, and He will help you to do what is right. Then one day He will allow you to live with Him in His forever home, Heaven.”

Remember the first step after the link is to explain Romans 10:13. Beginning here will keep you focused on giving the child the opportunity to respond to the Gospel you have just presented. Once you

have thoroughly explained the condition promise verse to children, you will want to give them the opportunity to call on God by believing on Jesus. Keep in mind that some of the children may have already made the decision to trust in Jesus as their Savior while you were teaching, while others may have additional questions about what it means to call on God. Be sure that you are very specific about the decision the children are making.

Listen to what could happen when the invitation is too general in nature. A Sunday School teacher was telling her class about Heaven, she spoke about the happiness they would experience there, and the beauty they would see. Finally she said, "How many of you want to go to Heaven?" Everyone put up their hand, except little Robby. The Sunday School teacher asked, "Robby, don't you want to go to Heaven too?" "Oh yes I do!" Said Robby, "But I thought you were making up a group to go right now." To avoid this confusion, you should say something like, "Perhaps today you have called on Jesus to save you. Or maybe you have some questions about calling on Jesus to save you." Notice that the terms used in this statement are terms you would have explained while teaching Romans 10:13, don't introduce new terms at this point in the invitation. Look at the condition and promise in the verse and use those terms when asking the children to respond to the invitation.

After this step you will want to have children close their eyes and bow their heads. If you ask them to do this earlier, they will begin peeking or just keep their eyes open because you are still talking. So it is better to wait until you have given all of your explanations and then ask them to close their eyes. Then while the children's eyes are closed you can ask them to "show you" that they would like to talk to you about the decision they made or show you they have questions about being saved. The words "**show me**" are important to remember since you do not want the children getting the idea that if they raise their hands they're saved. You want them to show you that they have made a decision or that they have questions about calling on Jesus so you can counsel the child one on one from Scripture. This gives you the opportunity to question the child and make sure he has truly understood the Gospel message and to answer any questions that he might have.

You might want to use some of the following ideas to allow the children to indicate their desire to be saved. You might say, "If today you have called on the Lord Jesus to be your Savior or if you have questions about calling on Jesus, will you please show me by.....?" And then you will want to give them one thing to do for them to show you they want to talk with you. It might be looking at you, or raising their hand or putting up their first finger. The method you use is to help you identify the children who want to talk with you about their decision to call on Jesus. Once they have indicated they would like to talk with you, you will want to give them a place to meet you. This place should be in an open area where other people can see you, this is especially important in today's world where so many children are exploited and abused.

You will want to meet with children in an area where they won't be easily distracted, so you will need to think about where that place will be before that class begins. Again, give them only one place for them to meet you and be there at the appointed time. Sometimes I have the children meet me in the front of the class once all the others have been dismissed. At times I have them meet me right then in the back

of the class, allowing my teammate to continue on with the teaching. I always tell children when giving the directions what we will do during counseling time. For example I may say something like, "If you looked at me just now to show me you called on Jesus to save you from sin, as soon as class is over, I would like you to meet me on the front seat, and I will show you from the Bible what it means to be saved." If the children are to meet you after club ends and you are only part way through your class session at the time the invitation is given, remind the children at the end of class that those who looked at me to show me that you called on Jesus to be your Savior or wanted to talk to me about what it means to call on Jesus to save you, remember to meet me in the front row. Giving thorough instruction to the children makes them be more comfortable in what you're planning to do and makes them more willing to talk with you.

I remember once while teaching a Vacation Bible School, a little girl indicated she had more questions about what it meant to believe on Jesus, but she was too shy to come and talk with me. After two or three days of her indicating that she had made a decision or had more questions I went to her class and asked to speak with her. She was such a quiet girl that she only spoke in a whisper, as I asked her questions though; it was evident that she understood the message of salvation, and wanted to be saved. I don't always have an opportunity to seek out the children if they don't come talk to me, but this time God urged me to do so and as a result I had the privilege of leading her to the Savior. You need to be sensitive to the Lords leading, and to the children in your class.

When you come to flash card 5, you can think of this as part of giving the invitation to the child to respond to the message that he or she had just heard. Begin by reading and explaining the verse, and then give the child an opportunity to indicate whether he or she has believed on Jesus for the very first time, or has additional questions about what it means to call on Jesus. To help you see how all of this teaching fits together smoothly, a demonstration will be done. The demonstration about to be given will start with the link leading to Romans 10:13, and will finish by separating the children from the group in order to counsel them from God's word. So take out your paper and write down the following things, **How is the invitation verse explained to the children? What questions were used to review the need and way of salvation? How did the teacher know who wanted to be counseled? And Where was the child told to meet the teacher for counseling?** Now listen with your childlike ears and write with your teachers eyes.

## **Demonstration:**

"Have you believed on Him today? If you haven't believed on Jesus, today is the day you could do that. Our last stop on the Romans Road tells you what you must do in order to be saved from sin and have that special friendship with God. Romans 10:13 says, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."* (KJV) Whosoever means you, to call on the name of the Lord means that you are putting your trust in Jesus alone to save you from the punishment of your sin. This is a very serious decision that only you can make. We talked a lot about what sin is today, do you know you're a sinner? Do you believe that you cannot do anything to get rid of your sin yourself? Do you believe that Jesus is

the perfect Son of God; do you believe that He is the only one who could make a way for you to have a special friendship with God, and that He did that by dying on the cross so you could have your sin forgiven? When you believe that Jesus is the only way to God, you can put your trust in Jesus alone. When you call on the name of the Lord by trusting in Jesus, God promises that He will save you from the punishment of sin. You will no longer be away from Him forever and ever. Instead you will be able to have a special friendship with God beginning today. Right now His Holy Spirit will come to live in the real you, He will help you get to know God better and to learn how to love God now. Then someday you'll be able to live with God in His home called Heaven.

I would like for you all to bow your heads and close your eyes. If today you called on Jesus to save you, or if you have questions about what it means to be saved, would you please show me by opening your eyes and looking right into mine? When I see your eyes I will know you want to talk to me about your decision to believe on Jesus. All of you who have opened your eyes and looked at me, as soon as class is over, I would like all of you to come sit on a chair in the front row, I will bring my Bible and together we can talk about the questions you may have and show you some promises God gives you when you believe on Jesus as your Saviour.”

(This concludes the demonstration)

## **Observation:**

In thinking about the demonstration, **what words or concepts did you hear explained in the verse? Did you hear some questions that reviewed the need and the way for salvation? Did you notice how the teacher would know if the child was ready to be counseled? Would the children have known where to meet the teacher?** Remember these important steps as you plan to give an invitation to the children in your class, and don't be surprised when they respond. Explaining God's way of salvation clearly is so important. You do not want the children in your class showing the same confusion that adults in George Barna's study had, thinking that there is more than one way to get to Heaven or that there is more than one way to have an eternal relationship with God. The Romans Road tool can help you explain the message of salvation in terms a young child can understand.

Children will gain a clear understanding of God, who He is and what He is like, of themselves and of their sin, of Jesus and His great love that He had for them, and the way that He showed it by providing a way for them to get to Heaven and to have an everlasting friendship with Him, and lastly, how they can be saved from their sin when they call on Jesus. In the last several sessions together we have looked at the individual Gospel truths the children should be taught. In the next session a complete demonstration will be done so that you can see how each of these parts fits together when sharing the message with children in your class. Will you begin praying now for the children with whom God will give you the opportunity to share this wonderful message?