

## Telling the Grand Story to Our Children



We all love good stories. From the earliest cave sketchings to the latest award winning movie and TV show, there seems to be something intrinsic that God put into human nature to want to tell and hear great stories about life and learning. From an early age we are told nursery rhymes and fairy tales and learn all about the adventures of great heroes and heroines. When we go to school we hear the stories of great kings and queens and about the Founding Fathers of our country and the great men and women who shaped American history. These stories are important to tell as they ground children in the American experience and provide points of reference and context for how students are to interpret the contemporary world. All nations, all movements, all people groups have grand stories about themselves and their history that are used to orientate and educate their children and explain to them their culture's identity and worldview.

Christianity, of course, has its own grand story told through the Bible, the person of Jesus, and the Gospel message. However, the important difference between the Christian story and most others is that instead of a grand story propping up a worldview, Christianity is a story in search of a worldview. It's a complete reversal of the way much of the world acts. Christianity already has a definitive, over-arching story to be told and understood; it's not telling new stories in order to validate a pre-existing social order or conception. At most, Christians are continually re-examining the established story in hopes of creating a worldview and social order that corresponds with the narrative.

This is why telling the grand story of God's redeeming work to our children is so central to establishing a proper worldview for Kingdom work. Without a proper foundation in a proper, grand story, children will develop other worldviews (usually unauthentic, self-serving worldviews) and then seek the stories, the narratives, and the "truths" that seem to best validate that worldview. The worldview is now buttressing one's sinful, self-serving nature. Ultimately, all false stories crack and eventually crumble when unavoidably confronted with reality, casting doubt upon the worldview and threatening an individual's self-validating conception. This is why the book of Proverbs teaches parents to train children in the way they should so they will not depart from it when they are older (22:6). This is why the Israelites continually told the story of God redeeming them from slavery. We must firmly immerse our children in

the Biblical narrative to prepare them for effective, God-honoring lives when they grow older - lives that develop a Christian worldview of authentic, self-giving values.

Here are some important ways we as parents can do so:

- **Get your child an age-appropriate Bible.** There are great children's and learner's Bibles available that focus on the stories of the Bible and teach fundamental principles of the Faith.
- **Read these stories to your children every night.** Most good early learning Bibles offer brief synopsis of the stories that can be read in a matter of minutes and can supplement what other stories you read to your child.
- **Find your children videos that tell Bible stories.** I'm a huge fan of Veggie Tales. I don't think anyone does Children's Ministry better than Bob and Larry. Those videos teach great Bible stories and other Scriptural lessons in fun, inventive ways that appeal to both children and parents.
- **Get your child involved in a Preschool and Elementary program that teaches the Bible.** Bethany's Children's Ministry offers a great curriculum that is narrative based. Over the course of your child's involvement in our weekend services, he or she will learn all the major stories of the Bible in order from Genesis to Revelation. Our curriculum, The Gospel Project, is the perfect way of enriching a child's understanding of the story of God's redemptive work in history through Israel and Jesus.
- **Get your child involved in an AWANA program.** This is a wonderful program that teaches Bible stories and Scripture memorization in a fun and entertaining way.

Children must be fully inculcated with the story of God's saving work through Christ in history, both in the individual stories of the Bible and the sweeping narrative of the Gospel message.

Without it, our children become divorced from the foundation of life, unable to comprehend a worldview that grows effective, God-honoring lifestyles. Without it, as adults, they are tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching that comes from deceitful people. With it, our children grow into authentic, realized human beings, firmly established in reality and prepared for lives of moral and mental exceptionalism.