



Seeing Jesus

by Jael Napoleon

It has been a busy last few months. But it has been good to find a rhythm. I've stayed connected with kids and their families that I've known for a while. I have also made some new connections since the summer with other camper families. Visiting families is one of my favorite things to do. Sometimes it can be really awkward in the beginning. I've definitely grown in my talking skills. Sometimes you try to introduce yourself to parents and get to know them and it feels like pushing a one-sided conversation. I go through my arsenal of questions and conversation starters and am left with an uninterested face and a "Thanks for stopping by." Talk about awkwardness. Especially when I drove 30 minutes across the city to see them and they don't want me in the house. While this does happen on occasion I will then attempt again. They are usually a lot warmer the second time. Maybe they feel I am legitimate and was not just "checking in" on them. I think by the second visit the parents and campers feel it is more genuine.

Other times parents can start pouring out their life story and welcome me in easily. I will tell them how much we enjoyed having their kids at camp and that I would love to stay connected. I don't think I've ever had a parent not want me to stay connected with their kids. The idea is always welcomed even though it is sometimes really uncomfortable in the beginning.

Often the campers are nervous to see camp people outside of camp. They don't know what to expect or if the cabin leaders are really as great as they remember in the camp bubble versus seeing them in "real life". But ask a few genuine questions and bring up some memories from their week of camp and they will warm up quickly. I often have a card game like Uno in my purse or a frisbee or soccer ball in the car as well as string for



making those friendship bracelets. I've been growing my collection of good kids' books and bible stories as well. Just this past week I introduced a 10 and 12-year-old to Adventures in Odyssey which are children's audio stories from Focus on the Family. We listened to it while coloring and then another time when I drove them home. It was such a moment of joy for me. Listening to Adventures in Odyssey with a couple of kids sitting in the back of my car. It brought back memories of when I was the one sitting in the back of the van listening to it on drives home as a kid. Some

days I feel like I should still be the kid in the back of the van and don't feel like I'm grown up enough to be in this position most of the time, but here I am.

The latest thing I've added to my collection of ministry tools is a puppy! I didn't think I would ever have a dog in the city but realizing what a good connecting point a dog can be, I caved at the opportunity. Zadio has already come on many visits with me and she gets greeted before I do. She is a favorite and is asked about often by the kids that know her. It is a good way of getting kids outside for some fresh air when they would rather sit inside on their phones or Ipad. "Let's take Zadio for a walk." works quite well.

All the ministry tools, creating conversations, asking questions, and coloring pages are for the goal of showing the kids and parents Jesus. The Savior of the world and our only Hope. I really don't know how people live in this world without him. It is a very dark place indeed, but thank goodness I can place my trust in Yeshua the Light of the world.



The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Isaiah 9:2

...because kids are worth it

God With Us

by Don Roe

The Christmas season has been a challenging time for me most of my life. When I was young my parents extravagantly bought us many toys—but I would only want one, very impractical one each year. Outside of that yearly disappointment, however, I appreciated the family time when my father would take time off work and be with us. As a teen I deplored the excess and materialism of unneeded presents, but my memories are all of visiting and family. As a young adult I found the season depressing as I struggled with having everything in life I needed while so many others went without. I lacked the ability to bring joy to the world and right the wrongs. As a father I tried to make the holiday time about paying attention to Jesus and family. As I get older and I understand myself and the world more Christmas is still challenging. I like to say, “my poor wife, she is the only one in the family that isn’t neurodiverse!” During the 3-4 days we are together each Christmas we need to take many quiet times as we are all introverted and easily overstimulated. But Christmas morning my daughter wakes up at about 4am and sits in the dark by the tree. One by one we join her and enjoy the silence and being really together with no stress and no expectations. It is a time of contentment and peace and unconditional acceptance and unconditional love. I think then we are getting closer to how God desires us to interact.

We had the first of our four discipleship retreats for campers last month and as usual I appreciated how the smaller size of the group led to a more familial atmosphere for ministry. The children were 10-14 years old. Some were hanging on to every word the speaker shared so that they could better live for God. But a few were bored or disbelieving as the speaker told of how God was with her in the painful times of her life. Caleb (not his real name) was one of these, he enjoyed the play times but was skeptical about the relevance of God in his life. On Saturday evening he felt sick and his grandparents



did not want to drive out here to get him so I gave him some Gravol and uncovered a couch where he could lie down and just watch the activity. I sat with him while he slept some of the time and talked with me some and I got to experience my favourite thing, listening to a kid talk about his life, unfiltered. Caleb likes to be seen as a mature (he’s 12) and in-control young man. He had been living away from his parents for four months. He told me he was looking forward to moving back but his body language did not agree. As we talked about the questions he has about life I was so appreciative I could be there to offer unconditional acceptance as I listened. Other kids would stop by for a few minutes to share the quiet and attention and then go back to play. Life sometimes does not make much sense to kids but God was with us in His peace and unconditional love.

This time of year can be disappointing, lonely and depressing for many people. God designed us for relationship; for contentment and peace; for unconditional acceptance of others who are struggling to find His plan for their lives; for unconditional love. That need is unmet by the world, even our closest loved ones cannot love us the way God intended. We live in a broken world. We don’t have to pretend we are happy all the time or that our lives are easy. Instead we can look for the privilege of sharing another’s burdens and sorrows; to quietly be present with them. And to share the joy when life circumstances are safe and they can play again. Emmanuel, “God with us”, came to us to show us the way.



I love You, Lord
Oh Your mercy never fails me
All my days, I've been held in Your hands
From the moment that I wake up
Until I lay my head
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God
Cause all my life You have been faithful
And all my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God

Jenn Johnson

...because kids are worth it

Inquire Of The Lord

1 Samuel 23:4 *So David asked the Lord again, and again the Lord replied, "Go Down to Keilah, for I will help you conquer the Philistines."*

In the first thirteen verses of this chapter, David inquires of the Lord four times about his current plans. This was David's way of life, and it should become ours as well! This is so much easier said than done. The stakes were really high with what David was asking of God, his life was on the line each time. When the 'stakes' are high in our own life, we are much more likely to inquire of God about what in the world is going on! What about when life is going just fine and dandy though? Do we still inquire of God about what is happening in our lives? Much less likely.

Psalms 139:23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

This is another prayer from David inquiring God to speak to him, except this time, it is a much more personal prayer. A prayer perhaps that David would pray quite often. Asking the God who created everything to search out anything offensive inside us is a very humbling experience. A very challenging prayer to pray and wait for God's response!

I'm writing this encouragement first to myself, and secondly to everyone else who reads this. I need to inquire of the Lord like David did. I need to inquire of God in the big moments in my life, but also the daily moments. I get caught to often in the trap of being busy for the Lord without being present with Him. I heard a well-known pastor say that he inquires of the Lord every year with his family if the Lord wants them to go onto the mission field. He is the pastor of a very successful, healthy, growing, exciting church. It would be so hard to willingly give up a ministry like that. I am encouraged and challenged by stories like that pastor and by David, who inquire of God, regardless of the cost or comfort they may be sacrificing.

Please join with me in prayer for ourselves and



others this Christmas season and beyond; that we may be quick to inquire of our Saviour and humble ourselves to obey His Word. We need a lot of missionaries this summer to run Gimli Bible Camp, and we will get them because people will take the time to inquire of the Lord for His plans this summer, and not our plans!

Family Update

Our family was very blessed to attend the CCI National Conference in Banff, and then spend a week visiting our friends and church community recently. When we left Alberta 2.5 years ago, we were hoping to visit within six months of leaving, but God had other plans. When we left this time, we had much less sadness in our hearts, but an awareness and gratefulness that our 'root system' of people who love, care and pray for our family is so deep and spread out. We are a very blessed family! Jade, Charlie, Fletcher, and Brogan are all looking forward to the Christmas season and the special family times!

Merry Christmas from the Penners!



Camp Needs

- ✦ A male discipleship director to minister alongside Jael
- ✦ Craft supplies
- ✦ Youth and small adult lifejackets
- ✦ Electrician to install a baseboard heater in our office (tricky location)
- ✦ 2 double kayaks
- ✦ Approximately 2' X 3' metal box with locking door for our lifeguard stand
- ✦ Commercial Slurpee machine
- ✦ Replacements for our home-made giant checkers table and connect 4 games (3' x 3')
- ✦ Chain link fencing
- ✦ Keurig coffee machine
- ✦ Large snow shovel
- ✦ ATV (ours was stolen and destroyed)
- ✦ Heavy duty curtain rods (20 X 4' long)

Beneficence

(the section where I ask you to give of your time, prayers or money)

The biography that has impacted me most in my life is that of George Müller. He cared for over 10,000 orphans during his lifetime, established 117 schools to offer Christian education and distributed 1.5 million New Testaments. What is most memorable is that he would not take a salary, make requests for support or go into debt. He prayed. God provided. He treated the children so well that nearby factories and mines complained that they could no longer get enough labourers because the orphans were apprenticed to better jobs.

One of the things I like best about ministering with One Hope Canada is that we do not go into debt for what we think we need at camp, we pray for God's direction and provision. We share what God is doing in children's and their family's lives, ask people to pray with us, and trust that if they listen to God our needs will be met. So often I have concentrated on the material needs when the situation is spiritual—whether it is a child's behaviour or a large repair bill, God is in control and can provide so much more perfectly than what we can drum up ourselves.

So many people I know have adopted the humanist worldview. Their faith is in themselves and their ability to know the truth and the way we should live with each other—and reject that God should have any say in their life choices. They want to teach us that their way, their truth will give us the life we desire. The best hope for our future is that we can demonstrate by our love that Jesus is the way, the truth and has the best plan for our lives.

The world has changed a lot in 200 years, and also very little. There are riches enough to meet the needs of God's children, but what God desires is a relationship with us—that we are His first love. That comes through prayer and obedience and trusting that God's plan for our lives is SO MUCH wiser than our own. We know that at Gimli Bible Camp what we teach is in exact opposition to what the children are hearing everywhere else. But we have the advantage—God is real and vitally important in our lives. We know whom we live for, and it is not ourselves. And He alone has the power to truly change lives. Pray with us for this ministry. In 95 summers over 20,000 young people have witnessed how God is real in our lives. We pray. God provides.

Every child of God is not called by the Lord to establish schools and orphan houses and to trust in the Lord for means for them. Yet, there is no reason why you may not experience, far more abundantly than we do now, His willingness to answer the prayers of His children. George Müller.

Praise

- ✚ For the continuing support, financially, emotionally and spiritually for all of our team. You bless us so much!
- ✚ For Zadie and how she opens doors for ministry wherever Jael goes
- ✚ That God can heal the pain of our campers. The world is not kind.
- ✚ Our vehicles are running well
- ✚ The first retreat was great! 3 more coming up. We appreciate these great ministry opportunities
- ✚ The lovely set of couches donated so we could completely redo our rental group furniture setup
- ✚ For our supportive church families
- ✚ That God is the same yesterday, today and forever



Prayer requests

- ✚ We need many missionaries this summer to care for all the children who want to come to camp
- ✚ For Jael's health and wisdom in pursuing ministry opportunities
- ✚ For safety of campers and their families at home this Christmas season
- ✚ For health and protection against flus and covid as people get together this winter
- ✚ To fill our remaining rental weekends
- ✚ That government relationships with Christian organizations will not deteriorate and we will be able to continue to share the good news of Jesus
- ✚ For those who have long covid and emotional trauma from the last 2 years

Donations very much appreciated. We subsidize 500 young people to come to camp each year. It costs a lot, but *kids are worth it*.

Gimli Bible Camp
Box 1579 Gimli R0C 1B0
Phone: (204) 642-5707
Email: gimli@onehopecanada.ca
web: gimlibiblecamp.com

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