



THE LIVING SENT PODCAST: SHOW NOTES

EPISODE: O52

TITLE: **Interview: Jerry Morris, Child Evangelism Fellowship (Reaching the Next Generation, Sharing the Gospel with Children, and Living As Everyday Missionaries)**

Episode Summary

In this episode, I sit down with Jerry Morris of Child Evangelism Fellowship to discuss why children are one of the greatest mission fields around us, how to confidently share the gospel with kids, and how ordinary believers can make an eternal impact right where they live. Whether you're a parent, grandparent, church leader, or simply want to live more intentionally for Christ, this conversation will equip and encourage you to live sent.

Helpful Links

 Visit Jerry's CEF Website: bigbendcef.org

 Visit Justin's Website: Justinwester.com

 Get the Book: [Living SENT on Amazon](#)

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Discussion Questions for Teams & Groups

1. Jerry talked about discovering his calling at a young age and waking up each day with a clear sense of purpose. What do you think keeps many Christians from living with that same clarity of mission? How can someone begin to discover or rediscover God's calling on their life?
2. Many believers feel intimidated when it comes to sharing the gospel with children. What fears or assumptions do you think are most common? Which of those fears have you personally experienced, and how did this conversation challenge them?
3. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." Why do you think ministry to children is often viewed as secondary or less significant than ministry to adults? What does Scripture suggest about God's heart for the next generation?
4. Jerry repeatedly emphasized going where the children are instead of expecting them to come to us. Where are the "mission fields" God has already placed in your everyday life? What would it look like to intentionally move toward people instead of waiting for them to come to you?
5. Parents are called to be the primary disciple-makers of their children, yet many feel unprepared for that responsibility. If you are a parent or grandparent, what is one practical change you could make to become more intentional in discipling the next generation? If you aren't, how can you help strengthen families who are?
6. One of the biggest ideas in this episode is that the gospel doesn't need to be simplified—it needs to be explained clearly. How would you explain the gospel to a seven-year-old? What parts would be most difficult for you, and why?
7. Imagine that one year from today you have fully embraced the challenge of this episode. What would be different about the way you pray, serve, invest in children, or share your faith? What's one specific step you can take this week to move in that direction?



Gospel Confidence Assessment

This short assessment is designed to help you identify how confident you are with sharing the gospel with children. .

Instructions: Circle the number that best describes your current level of confidence.

- 1 = Not at all confident
- 2 = Slightly confident
- 3 = Somewhat confident
- 4 = Confident
- 5 = Very confident

Understanding the Gospel

I can clearly explain why every person needs Jesus.

1 2 3 4 5

I could explain the gospel in simple language that a child could understand.

1 2 3 4 5

I know the difference between simply knowing about Jesus and personally trusting Him.

1 2 3 4 5

Starting the Conversation

I know how to naturally begin a spiritual conversation with a child.

1 2 3 4 5



I feel comfortable asking a child questions about what they believe.

1 2 3 4 5

I know how to respond if a child asks difficult spiritual questions.

1 2 3 4 5

Inviting a Response

I would feel comfortable inviting a child to place their faith in Christ.

1 2 3 4 5

I know what I would say if a child wanted to become a Christian.

1 2 3 4 5

I know what to do after a child professes faith in Christ.

1 2 3 4 5

Living SENT

I regularly pray for the children God has placed in my life.

1 2 3 4 5

I intentionally look for opportunities to share the gospel with children.

1 2 3 4 5

I believe God can use someone like me to make an eternal difference in the life of a child.

1 2 3 4 5



Reflection

Which statement received your lowest score?

Why do you think that area feels difficult?

Which child (or family) has God already placed on your heart?

What is one conversation you could have with them in the next month?

My Next Step

After listening to this episode, I will:

- ☐ Pray daily for one child.
- ☐ Share the gospel with a child.
- ☐ Learn a simple gospel presentation (such as the Wordless Book).
- ☐ Volunteer in my church's next generation ministry.
- ☐ Explore serving in a Good News Club or similar outreach.
- ☐ Encourage another parent or grandparent to disciple their children.



Full Episode Transcript

All right, well, Jerry Morris, thank you so much for being on the Living Scent podcast. I'm excited to be meeting with you and I'm excited to hear what you have to share with the listeners. One of the reasons why I wanted to have you on is because I remember a couple years ago when you were serving as an elder in our church here at Canopy Roads, you said something in an AMT meeting that struck me. You said, you know, I wake up and I know what my purpose is. You said, I wake up and I know what my passion is, and that's to share the gospel with kids.

And so I just think that's rare these days. And I love your focus and I love your heart for that. And so I wanted to have you on today. So thank you for being here. Thank you.

Thank you, Justin. I really appreciate the invite. And I do remember, probably I've said that often, I think what a joy it is as a believer, especially as a man, to get up with a purpose and not dread going to work or to know what your calling is. I will tell you, Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life, that book really helped me to see how I'm designed and gifted and why there's a passion in my heart for children. So, yeah, I get.

Get excited when I know that we might be able to do something new to reach boys and girls in the community. So, yeah, and to have a part in that, I love that. Well, before we hit record, you know, we were talking about the idea of calling and the idea of, you know, discovering your God given purpose in life. So I want to ask you, you know, take us back to the beginning. If someone's not familiar with who you are, what you currently do.

Sure. How did you first sense that God was stirring your heart to kind of, kind of focus, well, praise the Lord? Well, it begins as a 10 year old boy being led to Christ by my pastor, who led me to the Lord at the church playground one afternoon, bought me an ice cream at Dairy Queen, used a penny in Ephesians 2, 8, 9 to explain to me what a gift is. And so I know it started with child conversion and Child evangelism for myself with my pastor leading me a small town church. I'm from, originally from Atlanta, Georgia, the Roswell, Georgia area, which is north Fulton County.

And as I stayed in my home church and I was the teenager that was jumping off the porch over the bushes, wrestling with kids out in the grass, just, I just was all the time engaging with the younger elementary students in a positive way usually, and just drawn to them. And as we were saying earlier, God used my pastors in my life. The pastor that led me to Christ and other associate pastors that pointed me towards children's ministry, even as a vocation, because I was



already drawn with the kids. So when we started to develop what we call today next gen was just to build the children's ministry and empowering me as a teenager, 15, 16. At the same time, our church was starting what we called children's church.

And that's really where I cut my teeth because that's nothing new. It's children's worship, just large group teaching during the adult services. And I got involved in those things. And then really a Saturday morning activity at the church, we had a gymnasium, if you will, and I just playing kickball or dodgeball and had snacks. And they just wanted things for the children at the church that were healthy and fun and wasn't a lot of Bible teaching, but just activities, but having a key to the building.

And as a teenager, just as a minor, having some leadership abilities, I started getting a sense and I learned early on, you know, to whom much is given, much is required. But you know, you start with whatever God gives you and then little by little your responsibility and then leadership grows. And so, Justin, I'm so thankful for my home church and those that saw in me like a magnetism, if you will. I call it an X factor today. You know, Jesus had that.

Jesus often in the gospels, he had a child on his lap, children were coming to him. And I just think God puts that in those of us who are called to ministry, to whatever calling he has for you, you'll have a propensity, a shape towards that. And for me it was that senior in high school pointed towards a Christian university there in the southeast. And I pursued a children's ministry degree. I was a Bible major with a children's ministry proficiency.

And as a senior in high school, I accepted God's call in my life for full time ministry. At the same time I was dating my wife and all I could tell her was, I know God's called me to ministry to reach kids. She Also had a passion and love for children. We're still serving today. Nearly 40 years of marriage, but we were serving in our home church in children's ministry even before we got engaged.

I love that. And we have been serving together, so it's been a journey. But I just know without a doubt that God's called me to reach boys and girls. And I'm thankful that I was able to capture that as an 18, 19 year old, pursue a degree in school and then eventually find my place now. So after you graduated college, did you head back home?

What was your next stop? Yes, I did. So in that setting, what we did is extension. And as a Bible major, you got credits and et cetera. It was part of the education program.

So I would drive home from Greenville, South Carolina to Roswell, Georgia on the weekends and



continue doing the children's church. Oh wow. At my church because it was very drivable and come in Friday afternoon and stay through Sunday night. Got to see my soon bride to be. But we served.

And again, that was my pastor overseeing me, mentoring me. You know, requirements for the school required that, you know, all of that was documented, that activity. I did it as an extension, if you will. And most all of us preachers went out and did prison ministry, jail ministry. So that was mine.

And so I continued doing that, graduated from school, and then Pam and I were engaged and then we kept serving in our local church. And Justin, all I knew to do as I pursued God's call for ministry was to stay in the local church serving. And I think that's key for anybody that's looking for opportunities in whatever part of God's ministry you want to go serve in. Find how your church is doing it, lead it, be a part of it. And we just kept our feet in it.

And we did it for quite a number of years before we really pursued the ministry that we're with today. But just serving in my local church, it's all I've known to do. And then I have to say this because I was working in a secular capacity, obviously I was married now, needed to provide for my family. And Justin, that's why my passion is so great. When you hear me say that I would go to work in a secular job and sit in. I had a truck and before work I'd sit in my truck miserable, weeping. God, you called me to ministry.

I know you called me to full time ministry, not just serving part time at my church. Sunday mornings, Wednesday night, I was thriving and happiest Sunday morning, Wednesday night with kids and I begged God. I said, According to Psalm 30, you put a desire in my heart and called me, take this desire away or put me in ministry. Well, God answered those prayers. It went through some pitfalls.

So I will tell the listeners, be careful what you pray for, because sometimes God answers. But I had to go through some hard things and lose the secular position that I had. But God was using that to direct me to the organization that I now serve with. That's great. Well, you and I have had the chance to serve together in actually a number of different capacities over the years.

And one thing that I've observed is that you are a very creative person. You like to do things differently. You don't like to do the same thing every single time. And so I know some of that comes from your early days in ministry. Can you talk a little bit about how you brought some creativity to the ministry, how you pushed the boundaries of traditional children's ministry?



Absolutely. Thank you. Yeah. Because one thing I will tell you that I learned early on, too, through conferences and all, is that one way to lose kids is to be boring and to keep ministry boring. And when I've had opportunity to speak in Awana conferences or other opportunities, I would tell church leaders and children's ministry leaders particular, you lose kids cause they think church is boring.

And then I say, because it is boring, you're doing the same thing all the time. You're not using any creative arts. So one of my passions is balloon twisting and gospel magic. Those are things God brought to me early on when I was trying to find my way and say, okay, God, I'm over six foot tall. I can be looming and intimidating to little people, little people, how can I reach them?

And so you have to develop things that will soften you and make you where kids are easy to approach and they will come to you, be approachable. And so some of those things, I don't see a lot of that today as much. Puppetry, ministry, creative arts, all kinds of things that you use with children help. But also, Justin, I think as I was thinking about this question, the tradition for Vacation Bible school is mornings 9 to 12. And when God gave me a platform on staff at a church, my first church as a children's pastor there in the Atlanta area, when we did vacation Bible school, we went to a nighttime setting.

And that kind of was a break from the norm. And I would encourage some churches to consider that we're doing it here at our church now, today. And also a master teacher concept. Another part of vacation Bible school is Giving out curriculum and just a variety of people. I'll share the lesson really quickly in a rotation.

And one thing I started doing in my ministry was what's called a master teacher concept. One or two master teachers that will own the Bible material so that it can be presented effectively as you can, you know, and work it into the schedule that way. So I don't know if that's really pushing the norm. I know it was a break from what a lot of churches do and there are other churches now that will do a PM or evening Bible school. But one thing I learned very quickly, the master teacher, it's allows us to make sure our gospel presentations and our Bible teaching is strong because it's focused with a few individuals with a teaching gift.

But also, as you've witnessed here, evening Bible school allows more people to serve than a traditional nine to noon in the morning. Not knocking those churches that do that, of course, not knocking that, but just going to an evening setting. We have men on our campus, we have variety of people serving, probably well over 70 volunteers that are coming this week. We happen to be running Bible school and so I think that was a little bit of a push, you know, just breaking a norm on how a traditional program like a vacation Bible school has been done. And so



always looking for ways to be out of the box.

And you know, kids like variety, always look for ways to do something. Mixing up who's speaking, mixing up what you're doing week to week. Sometimes that kind of we get, we get really mundane and routine and so just trying to look for some ways to stretch yourself, get out of your comfort zone. Kids love it when you surprise them. They really need to not know what you're going to do next week.

And don't tell them. Yeah, and don't tell them except, hey, be here next Sunday. You don't want to miss it. Well, what are we doing? You don't want to miss it.

Be here. That's right. Those are just simple things that get us breaking normal routines helps build next gen ministry. Well, I know for you mentioned calling at the beginning and folks discovering their God given purpose and how God has shaped them for a particular ministry. I know a lot of people that wrestle with that idea and with that calling.

They start the process by kind of exploring a lot of things. They'll explore children's ministry, they'll explore, you know, teen ministry, they'll explore music or something else. What was it about kids in particular that really stirred your heart? Was there something unique about that developmental stage that you thought God had particularly wired you for. Or was it something else?

Well, thank you. And that's an excellent question. I think one part of it is they're so innocent in their innocence. They're so loving and caring, but they're so open and receptive to the love of God. And they still have that tender, tender spirit.

And yes, we know at different ages they want to please the teacher and please the adult. But I think what's drawn me to children is they're just so receptive. You know, when you reach children ages from toddler, you can start planting seeds at 2 and 3, really. But when they start reaching school age, going into kindergarten, five, up through primary ages, through second, third grade, they're just so open. And that's why Jesus said, let the children come to me, because they want to believe you're not undoing a lot of mistakes.

You're not undoing a lot of sinful behavior. Now, they do have sin, but, you know, they don't have the scars of sin, of a life journey of addictions and other things that people can tend to fall into as they get older and older. So, Justin, I really think it's their tenderness to the gospel and their receptiveness to the message, the admonitions from Scripture that Jesus said in Mark 10 and Matthew 19, let them come, let them come. They can believe. Matthew 18, he says, don't



offend these, that will believe in me.

So I think it's the teaching of Scripture is very clear, and God has used that in my heart. And then just also really just the urgency that we better reach them while we can. But they're just so open and, you know, and they're loving and they'll love you back, you know, and sometimes as we deal with other people, teens or adults, sometimes that can be a little more discouraging. But really, children's ministry is so rewarding just because of the nature of kids themselves. Yeah, they're just so willing to bend and trust and keep in mind for the listeners, they don't have to comprehend Genesis to Revelation, the whole entire scriptural teachings that we have to become, first of all, a believer in Christ to know that Jesus died for them and he saved them and then start their journey.

But how rewarding to be able to start a person off on their spiritual journey at a young, tender age. And of course, I have to tell you what just came to mind. DL Moody said, when we reach children, we save a whole entire life. And there's just an example about when we reach adults, they just have a limited amount of time not to negate that anyway or diminish it. It's important, obviously.

But, boy, when we go out and we reach young people, teens or children, they have their whole life to live for the Lord. That's just so rewarding. Justin, there are children from my children's ministry at my home church today that my wife and I taught in children's church, and they're on the mission field or pastoring churches today. And as an adult, I get to see some of the fruit. Yeah.

So I think that's also another good motivator for us. Excellent. Yeah, Yeah, I love that. Well, I want to get to what you're currently doing now. So for listeners who might not be familiar with Child Evangelism Fellowship, you know, what is that?

We're going to call it CEF for short. That's good. But what is CEF and, you know, what is your role as director for the Big Bend region here? Fantastic. Thank you.

Wonderful question. We love sharing with people about our ministry. It's Child Evangelism Fellowship. And CEF is a ministry that is global, nearly every country of the world. The one remaining country for sure that we don't have active ministry in face to face ministry would be North Korea, although we do outreach into North Korea through some discrete methods.

But we don't have ministry established on the ground. But CEF is the world's largest and oldest evangelistic ministry to boys and girls ages 5 to 12. Our 90th birthday is coming up next year.



This year we celebrated 89 years as a ministry to boys and girls specializing in reaching children with the gospel, discipling them in the word of God and then establishing them in the local church. We are very local church friendly.

In fact, our desire is to partner with local churches. We are a missions organization. We're a missions sending organization. We come alongside the local churches to empower the believers to do ministry, to equip saints for service. That's what we're all about.

We've done this for nearly 90 years throughout the world and primarily internationally. We obviously go in. The best way to do foreign missions is to train nationals to reach their own. That's most cost effective. But then just right here in the great usa, we are established in states, organized with a state board and a state director, if you will.

I fall under that leadership as a local director for a part of Florida. My chapter is called the Big Bend Chapter, based in Tallahassee, Florida. Justin. Since 1966, CEF has had a presence here in Leon county and the surrounding area so privileged to serve here. I did start my journey with this CEF ministry in northwest Georgia.

God used that to get us started as a pioneer missionary from Atlanta up through to the Chattanooga area and up to Rome and that part of North Georgia, if people are familiar with that, up 75 and to the west. But today we serve here since 2004. July 1st is my anniversary with the chapter here, Big Ben chapter, nine counties presently from Jefferson county over to Calhoun and Liberty in Bay county. Trying to reach boys and girls in this part of the state. A local director organizes the ministry, meets with churches, meets with pastor leaders.

However, it's structured either a missions pastor, a next gen pastor, and I know we're going to be talking about our primary means of reaching the boys and girls since 1937 is what's called a good News club, and that is a weekly Bible club. Our founder, Mr. O, began good News clubs with his wife. And then because they started this Bible club movement that spread across America and then eventually into the world. First missionaries went to Brazil. International ministries went to Brazil, still active today throughout all of South America.

It started with a weekly Bible club, which meant they realized we better write the curriculum and train the volunteers, which was a lot of housewives in the day and time back, you know, over the decades. And so we do all of those things. CEF provides to a church a program that's proven nine decades effective. And I know we'll get to the fact that today we have a privilege and honor in America to take this program weekly to the public school system. That was a big key part of our history because good news clubs were dying in America until 2001.



Well, hit on that because I'm sure someone listening is going, wait, you take. No, you take the Bible into the public school? How is that? How is that even possible? I read the news.

I watch the news. You can't do that, right? Well, that is a real misnomer, right? Because God was kicked out of the public schools thanks to Madeline Murray o'. Hare.

But I have to tell you, we've been back in the public schools for quite some time. But from the late 30s through the decades leading up to the 2000s, Good News Club started to diminish because the volunteer force, the stay at home moms, were diminishing. They were going into the workforce. So our good news clubs that met in homes, carports, garages, bonus rooms, even some daycare centers and things, if your volunteer paces dwin bases dwindling. The ministry was suffering.

But Praise the Lord. A local director in New York State challenged the school system there in New York, which led to a hallmark ruling by the United States Supreme Court. 25 years ago this month, June 11, 2001, our United States, the highest court of the land, ruled that as Christian believers, we have equal access and equal and fair treatment to take the Bible into the public school setting. Well, what does that look like? There's always been release time programs where children are dismissed in some parts of the country to leave during the school day and go back.

But what we are doing mostly today, the public school buildings are paid for by our tax dollars. And so it's no different than a Boy Scout troop, a homeowners association, a sports related program, girls on the run, or some other kind of sports fitness program. When the school bell rings at the end of the school day and here it's close to three o', clock, wherever you live, it might be different from that time on. Churches and volunteers can come in and use the school building that our taxes pay for to get permission through the school system and the principal particularly to come in. And because the way the law is written, the federal employees, the school teachers are not endorsing.

The school districts are not endorsing. They can't endorse any kind of religious program. This is volunteers. These are local churches coming in. Justin, I will tell you, we've been to meetings here recently where in our particular area.

Now, school districts are recognizing they need faith based programming on campuses. I want to encourage any listener out there that if you have any concern about this, I will tell you the law has been protecting us since 2001 to go in an organized method. We are very organized. I know that's important and very safe because we do child protection background checks on every



volunteer in our ministry. And so that's very important to the school districts when we come to them as a church and with CEF and partnership, we say everybody that's coming to do this program has been screened in background check and no crime against a child, I will reiterate, no child against a crime would allow a person to volunteer with cef.

And so there are other ways people that have that in their history can serve. But that's a protection. It's a protection for the parents, the children. So we go into the public school system and do a weekly Bible club called Good News Club. But my wife and I don't do them alone.

It's through hundreds of volunteers that come from local churches. Yeah, that's great. And I kind of wanted to pause here for a second, just for, you know, the listeners, I wanted to draw just a straight line so they don't miss it. Something you said really just kind of resonated with me. Good News Club in particular is an emphasis where churches and volunteers from those churches are taking the gospel to kids that in a lot of cases would never come to them on a Sunday morning.

Absolutely. That is the heart of a missionary. And I remember one time you were, you and Jenna and a few others from our team, we did a recruiting video and played it for our church here in Tallahassee. And you said something on the video that has always stuck with me and I loved it. You said, if you sign up for Good News Club and you're trained and you're a part of the team, he said, you said you get to go on a mission trip every single week.

Absolutely. And what I love about that is for a lot of people, the idea of missions is foreign. It's something that's occasional. Good News Club provides an opportunity for you to live like, act like, serve like a missionary every single week. Every week.

And I love that. I love that. And there's no airfare to pay. There's no passports to get right. It's already legal.

In fact, we'll go through the requirements even for the school districts, if they want us to go in and have badges made and be screened through them, anything we can do that, you know, it will take a little bit of time, but, you know, our church actually partners to go into a public school that's three miles from our church door and you hit on it. Now, here's what we have to understand about next gen ministry. Kindergartners and first graders cannot come to church by themselves. Teen ministry does have the advantage when students are able to drive, have the ability to drive, and if they have their own vehicles. And again, not to knock anything against our brothers and sisters that serve in teen ministry.

We serve in teen ministry as well, to a degree. But children can't come to church on their own



unless the family is drawn. But here's what I will tell you, Justin. Every week, a mission trip to the public school is so feasible and so easy. We'll provide the background checks, the training needed, but it's so cost effective, even we have sponsorships that the churches pay well.

When we're doing 24 to 27 weeks of ministry, those are touches 24 to 27 times. That's a mission trip every week. And usually it's right close to where somebody lives. We look for Schools and churches that are within a 5 to 10 mile radius of the church. So it's so practical to go.

When the sponsorship fee is broken down, Justin, that churches sponsor the club program. It's less than a hundred dollars a week to take the gospel with all the curriculum and materials and training. So it's Acts 1:8. We have to start with our own Jerusalem. Right.

Well, and I remember this too. We actually, if there's any church leaders listening too, we ran some numbers a few years back. It might be two years ago now. And probably for most churches, you're going to find that the people that show up to your churches have most often been invited by a friend. You say, how did you hear about a church?

How did you get here for the first time? They say, oh, so and so invited me. Right behind that for our church was Good News Club. So that was our first one, which is what we would expect. The second one, I didn't expect this.

But families that connected and they actually became regular attenders or members, they said it was Good News Club that brought us here. So you talked about a partnership with a local church. It was a bridge. You weren't just blowing smoke. It actually is a partner.

No, it just takes time. Yeah, sure. And it's a bridge. We like to say CEF is a Good News Club is a bridge. If there's a church leader out there, a pastor struggling to figure out how can we reach more children in the community.

Well, because things are different today. The majority of unchurched boys and girls are in an after school program at the public school system. Now we reach homeschool children. We have home educated children can come to our programs even in some private school settings. But they're not our target, primary target, it's the public schools.

Because while it's legal, we want to be there. But yes, it is a bridge every week. And maybe later we'll tell a story about how there is a whole family in our church today because a child invited a friend to Good News Club. But you know, unless the church has something like a grief recovery, divorce recovery, financial peace, something that draws the adults in, they're going to bring their



kids in tow. But when we go out into the highways and byways, if you will, you know, which we were told to go out and compel them to come in, go where the children are.

Our founders told us, if you're going to reach the boys and girls, you have to go where the kids are. And today, Justin, they're at the public school in the after school Programs or maybe a boys and girls club or YMCA wherever you live, where you can go in, in those afternoon hours and reach them. But the power of the partnership, Justin, because we want to establish them in the local church is we tell our pastor friends, we're not a church, you're the church. Church membership, baptism, all those things that you discipleship as your church wants to disciple. That's the power of the partnership.

You take your volunteers from your church and sometimes there's church staff, next gen staff involved, not required. But you sometimes predominantly that's the case. And say, and boys and girls, by the way, if you don't have a church that you're going to for Easter or for Christmas or for the summertime programming like a VBS or a camp or something, hey, we go to this church, this is our church. And really the beautiful thing about the partnership, Justin, is what makes it a bridge is. And I get asked this often, can we tell the kids about our church?

We send home materials every week, as you remember. Memory, verse, information, discipleship, tools and resources, flyers and things to promote the church services and what's happening at your church. And there's no greater opportunity than to put a child in the car pickup line with a volunteer from the Baptist church or the local church and say thank you that your son or daughter comes to our club. By the way, if you don't have a church home, we'd love to see you Sunday. That's where real ministry happens to the adults is in the car pickup.

But you know what, pastor leaders, you have to be out there in the community in a good news club setting or some type of outreach program, reaching people, connecting people to your church and inviting them and they'll come because you care. You know what draws parents too. And I think I know you have a wonderful family of four and so do we. Parents take notice when somebody cares about their child. And I will tell you, Justin, probably one of the greatest ways that Good News Club is a blessing to parents is here's every week someone people giving of their time for about two and a half hours to love on their kids, tell them about God's love, build relationship with their child, be a friendly face, give them a message of hope, greet the parent, be welcoming to them and say, you know, we care about your child and you, why not come and worship with us?

And it's a draw and it works absolutely well. I wanted to focus in on actually sharing the gospel. I know you and your team and the probably child evangelism fellowship at large has Shared the



gospel. I can't even imagine how many times. It's just kind of cool to think about over 90 years.

Yeah, millions and millions, I'm sure. Yes. But, you know, many people, I think, assume that children need to, you know, wait until they're a little bit older until they can really understand the gospel, you know, really understand some of these big truths. Right. Why is it so important to begin reaching children right now, Right where they're at at this particular age and stage?

Well, thank you. That's a wonderful question. And when the way you phrase those comments just made me go to James, chapter four, where James tells us, he that knows to do good and does it not to him it is sin. So when you see your child or a grandchild or child in the neighborhood, at whatever age they are, and they start to recognize that they have.

They know the difference between what is right and what is wrong. And usually it starts with obeying a parent or a teacher or, you know, someone in a daycare setting. So even at a tender age, boys and girls should be taught by parents and those that love them and their family what's right and wrong, what disobedience is. Children can recognize that they have a problem called sin. And as we are commanded to teach them about God and his love and about who Jesus is, and again, I said earlier, they're so receptive to that message, then they can start to understand enough to know that because of what Jesus did, many children know the story about Jesus and maybe they've been exposed in some way, but they don't know that it was to make a difference for them.

Many people know the story about Jesus even being crucified and put to death and rising again. But what does that mean for me? Well, boys and girls can be taught that, and because their hearts are still tender and they're not relying on good works, as we age and get older, we think more and more. And maybe it's based on cultural pressures and things. We have to do something to earn our way to heaven.

You know, I can't be good enough. And all these lies the enemy puts in our minds and through other things that we think we have to earn our way to heaven. But that is such a fallacy that boys and girls can understand enough that they can rely and depend on, on what Jesus did. I can't explain truly today how something Jesus did on a cross, a Roman cross, thousands of years ago, makes a difference today. But when we put our faith in the teaching of the gospel and the authority of scripture, the Gospel plan is God's gospel plan.

And Justin and I have said this often, there's not a different plan of salvation for adults and children. It's the same. And I would say to our listeners, don't think there has to be a different message for boys and girls, that there should be for teens or even older people. No, it's a gospel



message. It's simple.

That doesn't negate it to not be unintelligible. It's simple enough. Praise God. Romans 1, Paul said, It's the power unto salvation to anyone who will believe. Well, Justin, we're very careful to use in our ministry and in the way our curriculum is designed and how we train for our volunteers when they share the gospel, to use words that are biblical because children think abstractly, abstract things, they think concretely, excuse me, so to say, words like John 3:16, for God so loved the world that he gave his own.

Whoever believes so biblical terms and believe in our explanation, and I don't think this would be a problem for our listeners, is to simply believe means to trust, depend or rely. It's not a head knowledge, it's a dependence, it's reliance. You know, children depend on adults for their needs. So I think they can grasp that to a degree. But it can start at an early age.

And really, as God told in the Old Testament, teachable moments, always talking about God, talking about who God is as the creator and who Jesus is, that he's God the Son and that he died on the cross but came back to life. Those are all key teachings that children need to hear at an early age. One of the things I've observed just by being a part of Good News Club, listening to and being a part of some of the trainings that you guys give for volunteers going to share the gospel with kids is how you don't shy away from what I would consider a complex word. You know, the word of sin, the word of repentance, the word belief. CEF doesn't shy away from those words.

They're key. What you lean into is explaining them, explaining them in a way that a kindergartner could understand all the way up to a fifth grader. But I wanted to ask you this. You know, you've watched thousands of children hear the gospel, and you've probably observed, you know, thousands of volunteers interacting with those children. What are some of the common mistakes that adults tend to make when they're trying to share the gospel with kids?

Well, I will tell you that most people may err on the side of Using verbiage and church terminology that most unchurched people don't know the meaning. And certainly children of age 5 and 6 and 7 and 8 and 10 don't understand. So one thing that's very key when reaching next gen ages, use childrenese. Okay, Childrenese language. Again, the gospel can be a simple message.

So I think most adults, you know, talk to their grandchild or their five or six year old grandchild or son or daughter, like they talk to a colleague at work that's 40, 50 years old about those things. But you hit on some key words. Repentance means to turn away, to change your thinking about.



To repent, to turn. You're going this direction, you know, to go away from.

We explain sin. Thank you. We make a real emphasis. We don't shall say. And I've had churches in my history asked me to come and share with the children.

But please don't tell them about sin. We don't want you to tell talk about sin. They want us to make the message soft and sweet and only talk about God's love. And you know, that's a whole other topic of discussion. But you know, in my past I would refuse those invites because no, we have to give a whole gospel message.

And so boys and girls need to know right from wrong that they're born a sinner. A sin. Sin is anything you think, say or do that breaks God's law or makes him sad. And then to give childlike examples. So for our listeners, when you're talking to a young child, use examples of their behavior.

I'll tell you this, Justin, as a Sunday school teacher once of elementary age children, the children give me the best examples of what sin is. So in one, not a good news club setting, but in a church setting. As a Sunday school teacher, we observed a, we were teaching like kindergarten to second grade. One child turned to another one and said, you're ugly and hurt this other child. Well, the next time my wife or I had a Bible lesson to present an example of sin that we used was boys and girls.

It's anything you think, say or do. Sometimes you use unkind words. Maybe you've told another child you're ugly or I don't like you. Well, can I tell you, children's eyes will get really big if they know they've done those things. I have got those examples for sin from the children themselves.

And when you do that, what we're doing, Justin, is you're making it relatable to where they are in their life to work towards life. Transformation. But another big mistake to answer your question, is when we share the gospel with children and children tell you they believed and trusted in Jesus, don't expect them to be adults. And you've heard me say this, don't put an adult head on a child's body. They're beginning a journey of faith.

We know it's a process of maturing and growing. So what I would say to any listener, you may have a grandchildren, we still sin. Don't look for perfection. None of us are perfect. We will only be perfect when we enter the gates of heaven and go home to glory.

It's a process. We're becoming Christlike on this journey. But look for steps of changes in behavior, desires. When you see a child that may tell you they believed and trusted in Jesus and



now they have a desire to tell their friend about Jesus. Well, God puts in a new believer, a desire to witness.

Well, children will display that. So don't look for perfection or adult behavior or grown up behavior in a young life, because that's not practical, it's not reasonable. They're still going to be a child and you want them to be a child. But they can believe in trust. Jesus said, don't offend those that believe in me.

So the Bible is clear. Children can be saved, but we put expectations on them and say, oh, it can't be real. And then that offends them. Matthew 18 and discourages them. We don't want to do that either.

So don't make those mistakes. Well, I know that CEF shares the gospel in a number of ways, but one of the ones that struck me, it was a story that I heard about something called the Wordless Book. Oh, yes. And I wanted to see if you could kind of walk us through that if you remember that story. I don't know if you could share that.

In a nutshell, I know parts of it. Yeah. Walk us through what is the Wordless Book? How do y' all use that? It's a wonderful tool and foundational for our ministry.

But we did not create the Wordless Book. People can go online and read some of these things. But Justin, I will tell you, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, back in his day, 1800s, there was a method giving the gospel using three colors, yellow or gold, if you will, black and red. So what we know is in the day, in his day, there were those three colors, gold, black and red. And that was being used.

The Wordless Book is a method. The message never changes, but our methods can change. And there's Romans Road, and there's the bridge and all these wonderful things that have been around. But wordless Book has a very long history. So Charles Spurgeon used colors to give the gospel message, and Fanny Crosby in India had a flag with the wordless book colors.

DL Moody embraced it and used it in children's meetings of thousands of children. And so the colors today are gold, black. We call it dark for obvious reasons, because scripturally, the Bible talks about us being born in the darkness of sin. And nor do we want to offend someone who might have a dark skin color or black color. So it takes care of that offense.

But it is scriptural. So there's the gold page, the black page. Red is the person and work of the Lord Jesus, a clean page, which is our invitation that we can be made white as snow. And then



CEF can lay claim to the green. And those are the growth steps.

So when our founders back in the 30s began developing materials and this method to strengthen it, CEF added the green. The wordless books started to be produced by Bookstores owned by H.A. Ironside back in the day, and these tools were made available. And you may see variations today of the colors, but those are the main five. The gold teaches about God's love and attributes of God as creator, love and holy.

The dark page, or black page, teaches about sin and how sin separates us from a holy, perfect God. Red page is all about Jesus dying on the cross. The red is a connection, obviously, to the blood, but also that Jesus died, but we don't keep him in the grave. There you go. On the third day, he came back to life.

And a lot of people share the gospel and sometimes they get excited, they forget to get Jesus out of the grave. And then even in my teaching, I make sure now, today we strengthen it with and he's reigning as king and he's in heaven. And then I like to add that he is coming back. That's the red page. But the clean page is an appropriation.

It's an invitation. It's the sermon invitation you need to appropriate. Children need to be invited, according to John 1:12, to become part of God's family, a child of God, or another verse that talks about believing and trusting. But they have to be invited. That's the clean page.

That would be an invitation step, if you will. And then once the child either chooses, no, I'm not ready, fine, we pray for them, but they didn't get saved then. But keep, keep staying in contact with me. That's the clean page. But if they do pray and make a decision.

They're just telling God, here's what I'm believing and trusting. We give promise verses. Hebrews 13, 5, 6. I will never leave you. The Lord is my helper.

And first John 1:9 is not a salvation verse. But Justin, it is so key. It's daily cleansing. And 1 John 1:9 is taught on the clean page. When, not if.

When you sin, if you'll confess. When you confess your sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us. That's daily cleansing. That's part of the journey for every believer. And then the green page teaches, grow, go to church or Good News Club or somewhere they hear the gospel, read the Bible for yourself and pray and talk to God.

When you read the Bible, boys and girls, that's God talking to you. When you pray and talk back



to him. That's part of it. O is obedience. Obey what you read in the Bible.

And W is just be a witness and tell others about him. So those are colors that are a method of sharing the gospel. And Justin, then, as you know, one of our things that differentiates our curriculum from others again is in a Bible lesson presentation, a Bible teaching in a large group. We take those colors, those application colors, and bring them and weave them into a Bible narrative story. That's all in our curriculum.

That's part of our training. So when a church partners with us, we will equip their people. How to give the gospel using the wordless book, how to counsel, asking some simple questions. But it's all based on this method which we found effective. You know, I always say if it was good enough for Spurgeon and D.L.

moody, and if you don't know who they are, you can research and see who they are. Great evangelists, right? But today it's a simple method. I know people that take this simple tool. You can use it.

I've won teenagers and adults to Christ. It's just a method. Methods change, but praise God, our message never changes. But all the way through, here's who God is. He loves you.

Here's the problem. The solution is Jesus. Why don't you believe and trust in him and join us forever Family and here, now that you've done that, and the last part of the green page is, and I'd love to have you come to my church where we can help you know more about God. So that's really the wordless book. I have to tell you.

On our website, bigbendcef.org www.bigbendcef.org our ministry has training for the wordless book. And on my website there on the training page, anybody could go on that page on our website and they will see this wordless book tool being demonstrated with a child. I leave that there always. Fantastic. We provide online training that's free on the wordless book.

And so. Thank you. Yeah, we love the wordless book, but again, it's a method, shares the gospel with children. I love that. It's easy, it's memorable.

The color prompts. Yep, the color prompts. And you can. I know they make bracelets. They make all kinds of stuff that will just jog your memory, even if you have a hard time remembering colors.

But I know for a lot of parents, they believe that they, for whatever reason, it could just be that



they have maybe a lack of confidence in sharing the gospel. They feel ill equipped to do so with their kids. I've witnessed a lot of parents wanting a pastor or a church leader to share the gospel for them. I think this puts it back in the hands of really in God's eyes, the primary disciple makers in the home are mom and dad. Absolutely.

And so the wordless book is a tool that you can use today to begin sharing the gospel with your kids. And you don't have to share it 100% perfectly. And you won't. And you won't, and you won't. But, you know, could you speak to maybe just encouraging parents to at least try it?

Yes, because they've been uniquely positioned in that child's life to do just that. Well. And tools and resources to use. The wordless book can be found at www.cefpress.com because we have wordless books available. Bookmarks with the scripture verses.

Other ways that you can use the wordless book, you can get those yourself. You can contact us here in Tallahassee. There's online training available. But I will just tell you you can do it. And I would say start, just share with that grandchild that spends the night with you over the weekend.

Or get a wordless book. And every color has a verse. They're simple verses. You're probably familiar with that. You want to show the child in the Bible that verse.

Or if they can't read, you can at least quote it to them. But just get started. Just sharing in our past. My wife and I have done in churches for parents, grandparents, for moms or dads or whomever, just simple wordless book training available. Still to do that today, we love to customize training for local churches.

Someone in our area, if you're Outside of Florida, CEF has a presence probably where you live. If you contact us here in Tallahassee and you want some tools and resources or support from cef, we want to provide that, but we really do feel like it should start in the home and you can do it. We've seen lots of children save because their parent took a simple tool like a wordless book, which we're happy to provide to you these resources and lead your own children or grandchildren or neighborhood children to Christ. And Justin, we have another program called it's Peer to peer Evangelism where we empower teenagers and children to go and give the gospel and we train children how to use the wordless book today also. So peer to peer evangelism with children taking their own wordless book is another viable way to reach neighborhood kids.

I love it. What I'll do is I will link in the show notes, all the websites and the trainings there. That way they have quick access. If you're listening and you want to, please contact us. Yeah, anything



as we wrap up here, anything that we didn't talk about that you want to talk about or mention as we, as we end, you know, Justin, time is of the essence.

Children are at risk. I can tell you a recent story that I just heard about in a prayer meeting call with colleagues. There was a little girl in the Tampa area that was in Good News Club one week, sustained some serious injuries in a car accident. So like from a Thursday to the next, beginning of the next week, this little eight or nine year old girl, I believe, who had come to faith. I don't know if she came to Faith in Good News Club, but she was member of a Good News club in the Tampa area, our local area there doing ministry in a public school setting.

So here's a little girl, beautiful smile, bright, engaging, placed her faith in Jesus Christ in club one week before the next week that little girl sustained those injuries that took her on into heaven. So children are at risk due to abuse to normal tragedies as we just hear about disasters around the world. And I will tell you the time is now. Paul wrote in Second Corinthians that now is the day of salvation and children can believe and they're willing and receptive. They're probably the easiest audience to go to.

And so I just have a urgency in my spirit. You know, every boy and girl, we just, you know, I can only reach those in my circle of influence. But don't wait, don't delay. If God's brought children into your life or maybe you don't have grandkids anymore, but neighborhood children, they need to hear the gospel. Get involved, Justin.

I will tell people, do like my wife and I did, be involved in your Next Gen ministry at your church. If your church doesn't have one, go to a pastor and say, how can we start something for children? Because today is the day of salvation. We need to reach the children. It's so urgent right now, and I do believe the Lord Jesus is coming back.

It could be today and it could be a thousand years from now. But what we do know is God's told us to go out and share the gospel with everyone, particularly the boys and girls. So thank you for this opportunity to share about our ministry and our journey. It's a joy to serve here at our church with you. Yeah, same here.

One of the things that we say on this podcast a lot is that you don't have to wonder if you're sent. God has already sent you into some mission fields. You're already in a household. You're already in a neighborhood. You already work.

You're already in your city. We call them the four mission fields. You didn't know you were already in. That's right. So you're already there.



So I just to piggyback on what you said, you know, it might not be okay. God is calling me to leave my vocation and do something completely different. But he is calling you to share the gospel right where you live, right where you work, right where you play. And I'm sure there are kids around you. So I hope that God uses this to burn in every single person's heart a desire to get up to share the gospel with.

Amen. That's right. So I appreciate you being on. Thank you, Justin. Yeah, thank you.