



Fun in the Summer “Son”

Apr/May/June 2009

It's that time of the year when many churches suspend their children's programming to allow for family vacations. But it is also the time when the children's ministry focus shifts to one week of the summer devoted to Vacation Bible School. Most of us have experienced these week-long programs with a specific focus, whether in our childhood or as adults helping bring the program to life. VBS is designed to provide many experiences, including, but not limited to, scripture memory, Bible study and usually some type of crafts to commemorate the week. It also presents the perfect opportunity for adding clown

ministry to the mix. VBS programming is not your usual Sunday morning worship activity. It is a little more casual and fun oriented. Therefore, if clowning is new to your congregation, this could be the time to introduce your clown character(s) to the ministry. Since church members usually expect something entertaining for the children as part of the VBS programming, those who might be offended by a clown on Sunday morning, could be more receptive to a clown during the course of the VBS week. This would allow you the opportunity to get your big foot in the door, so to speak!

A clown involved in VBS could be used in many aspects of the program. For the beginner, maybe an appearance one night with just a walk-around during the recreation time would be a good start. Being a part of the last night of VBS as a treat for the children could also be a good use of your skills. You could do a short presentation as part of the program and then maybe do some face painting and/or balloon sculptures depending on the size of the group.

I remember many years ago a woman from a small church called me to ask if “Flower” did Vacation Bible Schools.

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Worry Free Children's Ministry

Please do not misunderstand the title of this article. I know that children's ministry has its times where you just want to pull your hair out (or pull out someone else's hair ☺). Last time I checked, worry is still a sin. Do we have the

right to worry about things? No we don't. Come on now folks, we really don't. We plan, we work, we pray, we do all the right things and then we worry. The Lord can't be pleased with this, and it is no wonder He withholds

His power in our ministry. FAITH is what activates God and only FAITH will make things happen. I am writing this way to try and encourage you who work in ministry. I KNOW THE TIMES ARE BAD,

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Ricky has 24 different programs using tricks and ventriloquism. His programs are tailored for adults, as well as for children.

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2010 National BTI Conference Dates Set

We are excited about our 2010 National Bring Them In Children's Ministry Conference. The conference will be celebrating our 35th year of ministry. The dates and location will be:

August 9—12, 2010
LifeWay's Ridgecrest
Conference Center
Ridgecrest, NC

While our regional conferences are excellent, this special conference will be a "super training event." The conference will have several tracks covering almost every area of children's ministry, including traditional ministries like Sunday school, children's church and bus ministry and creative ministries like Christian clowning, Gospel magic, and juggling (just to name a few). We will also have some great Christian performers and evangelists that you will enjoy and learn from. Everything will be designed for those who serve in the children's ministry of the local church.

We are still working on the cost of the conference but we do know that it will be as cost effective as we can make it and it will be all inclusive—the price will include your accommodations, your meals and the entire conference. It will be a great time to get away for a few days and enjoy the benefits of an exceptional training event—the sort of event you will want to attend along with all those in your church who work in your children's ministry.

We hope you will mark the dates and start planning now to join us for this unique opportunity for improving your ministry to boys and girls. We hope to have all the details ready for you by the end of the year.

Providing the best training possible has been the passion and goal of the Bring Them In Ministry for over three decades. We are elated that

this new conference will continue to do just that as we commemorate 35 years of ministry of helping churches reach children for Christ.

Cool Bus Idea

Here's a simple, easy and inexpensive idea that will help your bus riders cool off this summer!

I did a fun thing for our bus Sunday. I made "Bro. Marty's World Famous Home Made Popsicles"!! I used to do this a lot years ago. The kids LOVED it and begged for more. I will do it again this week.

Here's how it is made:

1. Buy 5 oz. plastic or wax cups (you can't use Styrofoam for this).
2. Mix a quart of lemon aid at TRIPLE STRENGTH so that it is real sour. I used Country Time.



3. Pour a layer into the bottom of the cup.
4. Place a popsicle stick in it and let it freeze hard.
5. Put a piece of bubble gum (or other candy) on top of the first layer.
6. Pour in a different color of Kool-Aid at TRIPLE STRENGTH and freeze hard. (I used red.) Take them out of the freeze and let them melt a little before the route and they will pop right out of the cup and they will have a cup to let it drip in.

You should have heard the slurping and smacking!

I am going to experiment with different colors and different candies.

Marty Cook and his wife Doris live outside Atlanta in Morrow, GA. After serving on church staff for 24 years, where Brother Marty worked in many areas of ministry, including the Bus and Children's Ministry, he is now a fulltime evangelist and teaches at Atlanta Baptist College. You can get more information on Brother Marty and his ministry at www.martycookministries.homestead.com

Fun in the Summer “Son”

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I had attended VBS from the time I was a small child, been involved as a helper during my teen years and had participated with one of the most accomplished VBS pastors of that day for several years. I had been everything from Princess Leia for his STAR WARS themed VBS, to a lady of the royal court for “Knights of the King.” In fact, it was at his request for a circus themed program that I first donned the costume and make-up and became “Flower” the Clown. So I answered, “Yes, I can do your Bible School.” I then asked, “Do you have a theme?” She answered, “No, we want you to do our Bible School.” I asked, “Do you have teachers?” “No, we want you to do our Bible School.” After a few more questions, with the same reply, I realized **they wanted me to do their Bible School!**

From that time to the present, I have been “doing” Bible Schools every summer at churches around the country. I have discovered along the way that doing VBS means different things to different people, so flexibility is an essential part of the work. Many times the size of the church determines much of what I will be doing there.

In every situation, I like for someone in authority (the pastor, the children’s minister, the VBS director, etc.) to open the program with the formalities that accompany most programs. They would welcome the attendees, conduct the pledges to the flags, take up the offering, etc. This establishes the fact that we are in church and there is an authority figure present. I think this is important for children to feel comfortable and to know that certain behavior is expected. In some of the smaller churches, when these things are accomplished, it is my turn. I will have the program for the next 45 minutes to an hour. I sing songs with the children (usually themed along with the VBS material) and then present

the lesson, using clown-related visuals (puppetry, juggling, skits, illusions, etc.) to emphasize the theme of the lesson. Since I personally don’t believe a clown should be the one extending the invitation for decisions, I finish by turning the program back to the authority figure to conclude as they see fit. Many times the children will enjoy refreshments and maybe craft time after the lesson time.

In most churches, with a larger attendance, I have the first half-hour (following the opening formalities) to introduce the lesson theme for the day. Then the children go to age appropriate classes for their lesson time, game time, refreshments and crafts. We assemble again at the end for another half-hour with Flower, using clowning to reinforce the lessons learned. Again, the person in charge will offer an invitation when they think the children are ready. Since this is usually the only week out of the year I am with these children, it makes sense to me that someone from their church would be more sensitive to their needs and to the timing for such an invitation.

I have also been in very large churches with over a thousand children in attendance. In these cases, I had my own special chapel and the children came to see me in their age groups. To get a more personal connection with the children, I would also roam the hallways as they arrived each day and as they were leaving. This gave opportunity for them to have a little one-on-one time with the clown.

There are several publishing companies that provide some great VBS materials every year. Choosing the right program can be left in the hands of the individual churches, or if you visit several churches, you might want to offer them all the same program. This gives you the opportunity to theme your costume, select the appropriate music, as well

as match your clown skills to the program. Thanks to the talent and hard work of a good friend, I am also able to provide a set, or back drop for the auditorium that helps present the theme for the week. These are all added touches that make your VBS program different and more exciting for the children to attend. Even kids have commented to me that they came because this is not the same VBS every other church in town is doing!

Vacation Bible Schools are designed to be an outreach to the children of the community, but they are also a great vehicle to teach Bible truths and scripture memorization to those who regularly attend church. Since I know that many of the scripture verses I can quote today are ones I learned in programs like VBS as a child, I realize the importance of being involved in such a program. An exciting bonus is seeing those who were children when I started “doing” VBS as Flower the Clown now bringing their own children to learn just as they did! I pray that you will take advantage of the opportunity to use your clowning as a part of this summer ministry with such a lasting impact on the lives of His children!

Brenda “Sam” Marshall has been clowning around as “Flower” since 1981. She has become a world class clown, ministering across the United States and around the world. She taught classes at the clown ministry conference, Joey to the World, the first eight years of its existence in Houston, TX as well as various other conferences and seminars, including many Bring Them In conferences. Brenda received the Clown Ministry Impact Award in 1999 for her impact on people and the art of Christian clowning and she is the author of “Sharing God’s Love Through Laughter - A Guide To Christian Clowning”



What Happens to Children When Churches Drop Their Bus Ministry?

- 1.Churches stop giving children a chance to comprehend the mystery and blessing of God's role in their lives.
- 2.Churches stop helping children recognize the impact of faith and trust in God as tools to accept their condition in life.
- 3.Churches withdraw the community of believers with which children could identify.
- 4.Children feel alienated and unwanted in a faith community.
- 5.Children are denied their birthright to worship and partake in the faith communities' ordained functions.
- 6.Children are isolated from the worship, sacraments, rituals, and observances of the faith communities.
- 7.Children are discriminated against in their right to practice the religion of choice due to their parent's and church's unconcern.
- 8.Churches deny children the opportunity to have a life in the faith communities.
- 9.Children become dependent on secular agencies and services to gain a sense of goodwill and fellowship denied them in their faith communities.
- 10.Children are very likely to become non-believers or non-religious due to

the absence of active witness in their lives.

What Happens to Children When Churches Start and Maintain a Bus Ministry?

- 1.Churches give children a chance to comprehend the mystery and blessing of God's role in their lives.
- 2.Churches help children recognize the impact of faith and trust in God as tools to accept their condition in life.
- 3.Churches provide the community of believers with which children could identify.
- 4.Children feel accepted and wanted in a faith community.
- 5.Children are provided their birthright to worship and partake in the faith communities' ordained functions.
- 6.Children are included in the worship, sacraments, rituals, and observances of the faith communities.

7.Children are equal in their right to practice their religion of choice due to the church's concern.

- 8.Churches give children the opportunity to have a life in the faith communities.
- 9.Children are freed from dependency on secular agencies and services to gain a sense of goodwill and fellowship.
- 10.Children very likely become believers and religious due to active witness in their lives.

Of course, all these things affect the child's family too. The entire purpose of the Bus Ministry is to reach the entire family.

Dr. Tom Lee is retired from LifeWay and now does supply preaching and church consulting. He and his wife Liz live in Clinton, TN. You can contact Tom at telcva@juno.com

Swap Links with BTI

If you're a church, a ministry or a Christian business, we would like to swap links with you. Just contact us at bringthemin@bringthemin.com and then add our link to your website and we will do the same for you. It is easy and it benefits both of us. To see what sort of ministries and businesses have linked with us, visit the *Links We Like* page of www.bringthemin.com

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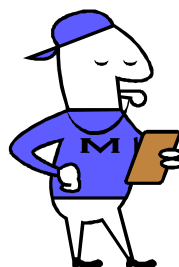
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"Doing Finances God's Way"

Worry Free Children's Ministry

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and if you listen to the liberal media and read the liberal papers for too long, you will begin to believe the lies that are being told. BUT, if you read the Word of God (we still have it, right?) then truth will outshine anything that is going on in the economy.

I am not a big bird with his head stuck in the sand. I know times are tough. At our Day Camp (which normally runs over 100 a day) we are only averaging around 65. That is a drastic drop. I talk with people and counsel with people and children whose families are having a tough time, so I know things are not as "good" as we are used to. BUT, could this be God? I believe it is. I truly believe that God is saying, "Ok, now look at Me. Trust Me! Come to Me! Believe in Me! Love Me!" NOTHING is ever out of our reach if we would only trust in God. "Lean not unto your own understanding... in all your ways acknowledge God and He will direct our paths."

I have struggled with whether to have our annual KIDZ KAMP this year. It is an expensive event and requires a lot of planning and work. The signup sheet looked very gloomy and the prospect of Camp looked grim. Well, I have decided to just

trust in God. I believe the kids need this camp! I have Bro. Larry Hipps coming and I just know it is God's will to see this happen. I have had Bro. Larry on hold for weeks and I finally told him it was on. Well, the day after I had my "FAITH LIFT," I had one person walk by me and hand me a check saying, "God told me to give you this for Kidz Kamp." I wanted to open the envelope right then, but I waited till I got in the car. It was in the amount of \$1,500.00! OMG! (Gosh). I know! Cool, huh! What a great God! His track record is perfect! (I am shouting as I write).

But wait, that's not all. After church that night I was on my way home. My phone rang and it was a young man in our church, and he wanted to know if I would come back to the church and meet him for a minute. Now, we all know that when we are heading home we don't want to go "back" to the church... we want to go home and sit in the big chair. Well, I sensed God in this, so I turned around and went back. This young man, who is single and hardly gets by, said to me, "God told me to do this." With those words, he handed me \$500.00 in cash for the camp. OH MY!

I don't have time to type any more;

just know that it is continuing to this day. Kids are being sponsored and needs are being met!

I may not like what is going on in Washington, or even who is sitting on the human throne... BUT I LIKE WHAT IS GOING ON IN HEAVEN AND I WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT GOD IS STILL ON HIS THRONE AND ALWAYS WILL BE!!

May the Lord bless you! as you trust in Him for your needs. He knows how to get it and make it come your way!!!

Jack Henry is the Children's Pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Powder Springs, GA where he heads up the Grace Baptist Kidz Connection. Pastor Jack is available for special Children's Meetings as well as Camps and Retreats. You can get more information by visiting www.gracega.org



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Holy Humor

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. 'Is there anything breakable in here?' asked the postal clerk.

'Only the Ten Commandments.' answered the lady.

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter.

Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: 'I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses.'

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note 'I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation.'

There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: 'I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets.'

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign... 'Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust.'

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, 'Boys and girls, what do we know about God?'

A hand shot up in the air. 'He is an artist!' said the kindergarten boy.

'Really? How do you know?' the teacher asked.

You know now - Our Father, who does art in Heaven...'

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

'Reverend,' said the young man, 'I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip.'

The minister chuckled, 'I know what you mean. It's the same in my business.'

The minister was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to ask the congregation to come up with more money than they were expecting for repairs to the church building. Therefore, he was annoyed to find that the regular organist was sick and a substitute had been brought in at the last minute. The substitute wanted to know what to play.

'Here's a copy of the service,' he said impatiently. 'But, you'll have to think of something to play after I make the announcement about the finances.'

During the service, the minister paused and said, 'Brothers and Sisters, we are in great difficulty; the roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected and we need \$4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge \$100 or more, please stand up.'

At that moment, the substitute organist played 'The Star Spangled Banner.'

And that is how the substitute became the regular organist!

Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some humor out of life,
And pass it on to other folk!



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