

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Sunday morning; we get the kids out of bed and get dressed for church. Why do we do this? Often, the first answer that parents give is, "So they will learn the Bible." But why do we read the Bible? Why do we share these stories with our children?

Perhaps we see the Bible as a kind of reference library—a combination of encyclopedia, rule book, and map or guide book, offering us answers to important questions, rules for right behavior, and the key to special secret information concerning our future. In that case, we will want to teach our children to use the Bible as a tool, just as we would teach them to use the dictionary. When they read or hear a selection from Scripture, we will want them to remember its meaning, or its moral, or its importance in establishing some point about God's will for us. We will try to be sure they get this right, and, as they grow older, we will want them to learn the skill of locating such texts in the Bible and using them to build arguments and draw conclusions.

But the Bible resists our using it exclusively as the source for theological, moral, or any other kind of formulation. It is not an orderly compendium of rules and revelations on a variety of subjects. It is a massive, sprawling collection of writings: law, prophecy, wisdom, poetry, history ... and, most of all, *story*. The Bible is the story of God's people: of their experience of being singled out, treasured, rescued, loved, disciplined, and sent forth to share their story with the whole world. Even more crucial than learning to boil down a passage of Scripture to a "lesson," or a "point" to be remembered, is the job of learning our way around this story, and allowing it to go to work on our imagination. Our job in reading the Bible, and in sharing the Bible with our children, is first and foremost to get to know the characters in the story: ourselves, and the living God, who is a Person, not an idea or a principle. When we have met him, and made the great and hazardous decision to entrust our lives to him, then his word can begin to speak to us, and we can hear it.

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THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

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# THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B  
PROPER 18  
TRACKS 1 and 2

*Some people brought a deaf man to Jesus,  
and asked him to heal him.*

MARK 7:32



People were always asking Jesus to heal them, or bringing someone else to Jesus to be healed.



This person was deaf. He could not hear. He also could not speak clearly.



Jesus took him aside, touched his tongue and ears, and prayed to God.

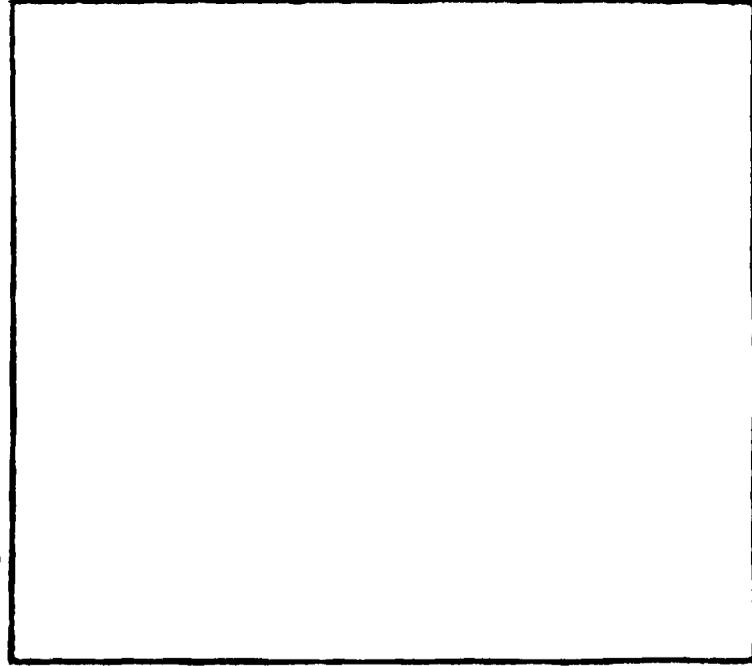


Then the man could hear, and he began to speak clearly!



The Bible tells us stories of Jesus's life. These stories are called GOSPELS. "Gospel" means "good news." Jesus's life is good news, because Jesus came to show us God's love.

The Bible also tells us the story of God's people before Jesus came. And it tells us God's plan for us. When we hear or read the Bible, we don't just say, "That's nice." We need to think, "What does this story tell me about God's love? Now that I have heard it, what should I do?"



In most churches, readers read the Bible from a special stand called a LECTERN. The lectern may be plain or fancy. Some lecterns are shaped like eagles or angels. Draw your own church's lectern in this space.