





## *Principles in the Spiritual life*

*Book title: - A series of principles in the spiritual life.*

*"How to serve children"*

*Prepared by:- a group of servants.*

*Edition: - First 2020*

*Deposit Number: - 7455*

*International numbering: - I.S.B.N 978-977-903-859-9*

*Translation and design: - Heba Rezq -ST. Jerome Translation Group.*

*\*We have faith in Christ that this series could reach every young Christian at the lowest cost.*

*\*You can share such faith with us through presenting this series to your friends and beloved ones.*

***Note:** - To get the full benefit from this series, kindly read the whole parts as arranged because disarrangement may cause confusion and discontinuity may cause frustration.*



*His Holiness Pope Tawadros II*

*Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the Holy See of St. Mark (pope 118)*



## *Preface*

When we realize the Christ's forgiveness to us and the eternal life which we have been granted as "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" **"Col. 1: 13"**, we cannot keep silent. But the words of God become "like a burning fire shut up in our bones" **"Jerm. 20:9"**.

And among our life stages; children are an essential stage which needs to know the words of the bible. Because what we are going to teach to them will last for their entire life and will affect their eternity as well.

So, we are going to put forward some simple principles that might help us in serving such important life stage. Actually, those principles are experiences resulted from serving children in Africa. But I guess they might be useful for serving children in many places.

We ask our Lord to keep our children fixed in our straight faith and fill them with grace to become His honest witnesses and preachers through the prayers of our Holy Mother Mariam and the prayers of his holiness Pope Tawadros the second, glory and honor to our God from now and forever, Amen.

During my first days in service in Africa I found my father, despite his old age, has a big experience in dealing with Children. All of them love him and gather around to listen to his words although he knows only few phrases of their local language and for sure he needs a translator to be able to serve them. I thought it might be due to the presents and biscuits he offers to them, but I found out that even if he does not give them anything, they will keep listening and miss his teaching. They do not get bored to gather around him everyday asking him to teach them, moreover they remember and memorize all his lessons. I said to myself; there might be a secret behind this and I have to ask him in order to get benefit from his experiences.

One day I asked him: father, would you please tell me the secret behind the children's love to you? How do they long for your teachings and never get bored every day, they even remember all what you say to them despite the huge difference in age, language and culture?

He said: there is an important set of principles in order to serve the children; son.

Firstly: - you have to realize their value and the value of serving them.

When you reach this realization, you will do your best to teach them and look after them. And the first thing you have to know is that: -

### **1- Children equal the blood of Christ.**

Each one of us equals the blood of Christ and is dear to His heart as well as the children, whatever their ages are, they equal the Christ blood and He loves and evaluates them very much. That is why when the disciples rebuked the children who came to the Christ, He was not pleased and said

“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” **“Matt. 19:14”**. We usually care for adults but we do not pay much attention to children because we do not know their real value.

I said: - Yes! mostly we do not care for children as same as adults as if they have less value than adults.

He said: - the second thing which you have to know in order to realize the value of children is: -

## **2- They are the church of future: -**

In other words, if we do not care for children today, there will be no churches in future. God’s church will be destroyed and His people will be set to perdition. If we do not teach our children the words of God, how will we teach others? If we do not pay attention to Jerusalem, how will we reach the ends of the earth?

It is written in the Holy Bible” But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” **“ 1st Timothy 5:8”**

Therefore, if we do not care for our own children, we will be worse than the unbelievers.

Our Coptic orthodox church realizes the importance of children that is why it cares for baptizing them at early childhood. Moreover; the practical experience proved that not baptizing the children is a very serious issue makes them feel alienated. When they go to church and do not share the

Communion as if they are not Christians, it becomes easily to deceive them to deny the Christ. Once I met a Muslim person in one of the African countries who used to ask any Christian person he meets if he has been baptized or not. If the Christian person says no, so, the Muslim person tells him “Then, you are Muslim.” Accordingly, each unbaptized person is Muslim and easily can deny Christ.

Consequently, serving the Children means the continuity of Church and not serving them means we sentence the church to death.

I said: - unbaptizing the children is a very dangerous issue that cannot be realized except for those who have seen its consequences!

He replied: - truly my son; one of the issues which led many people in Europe to deny the Christ and become atheist is neglecting the children and their baptism. In one of the African countries, one of the church servants wanted to know why youth do not go to church and he found out that neglecting teaching the children the word of God is the reason behind their scarcity in church. So, if you want to construct the third floor, you have to start with the base, then the first and the second floors!

Anyhow; the third thing which you have to know in order to realize the value of children is: -

### **3- Children are easily shaped.**

It is easy to teach the children all the spiritual issues because they are still innocent and pure. But if we neglect teaching them about Jesus love and how they can pray and become real sons of the Christ, they will be shaped

through media and community and they will become the sons of Satan. And Satan will use every method and each chance to destroy the kids and will implant in them every evil thought in order to perish them. If we do not tell them about Jesus love, they will be easily attacked with sins when they become youth especially the sins of lust. It will be hard to return them back to church and they will lose their hope and become pagans. If we do not experience the Christ love in our childhood, it will be difficult to repent and go back to church when we become adults. Childhood teaching is similar to the base of any building as without the base the building cannot be completed. So, if we do not snatch the opportunity and teach our kids while they are still young, it will be hard to teach them later as the bible says “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” **Proverbs 22:6**”. Our ancestors said in the past “learning in childhood is like engraving on a stone, and learning in old age is like engraving on water.”

I said:- but how can I teach them? What are the methods?

He replied: - there are three important principles in teaching the children as follow: -

### 1-The loud voice (acclamation): -

Kids are naturally active and vital, so if you speak with them in a calm voice, they will feel bored. But if you

Importance of serving children		
They equal the blood of Christ	They are the future church	Children are easily shaped



raise up your voice and make them repeat the information loudly, they will concentrate and pay attention to you. God rejoices when He hears their acclamation as written in the holy bible “ "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise” “ **Mathew 21:16**”

I said: - you are right, even grown-ups sometimes feel bored of the low voice. If so, what is the second principle in teaching the children?

He answered: - the second principle is: -

## **2- Acting: -**

To deliver an information to the kids we have to use the drama in explaining any story either from the Holy Bible or the hagiography. Because when they participate in acting, they become more focused and receive the information delightfully. Thereof, any information becomes a part of their minds.

I wondered: - how can they act without memorizing any scenario or even practicing?

He said:- it does not need any scenario or practicing, just a simple acting. For instance; when we tell Adam's story, we say that God created Adam from dust in the sixth day on His image. Then, we choose a boy and consider him as Adam. Thereafter, we ask the kids: who is he?

They answer:- he is Adam.

Then, we continue that Adam was alone and God wanted to create a partner for him. So, we say that God put Adam to sleep and took a rib from him and created Eve. Thereof, we ask the child to pretend sleeping and we choose a young female child and say this is Eve. After that, we ask the kids who is she?

they reply: she is Eve.

Then we say that there were lots of trees in heaven. So, we choose three kids to play the role of trees. Then, God told Adam to eat from all trees except one. So, we pick a fourth kid to represent the forbidden tree. God told Adam and Eve if they eat from this tree, they will die!

Thus; we ask the children; what happens if Adam and Eve eat from the tree?

Children reply: - they will die.

We continue the story saying that; one day the serpent appears. We choose a kid to play the role of the serpent. It told Eve to eat from the tree, but Eve refused because if they eat from the tree they will die. But the serpent convinces Eve that they will not die, but they will become like God.

Then we ask the kids: is the serpent liar or honest?

They reply:- liar.

So, we ask them to repeat three times that the serpent is liar.

We tell them to repeat that Satan is liar.

Thereafter, we ask them: are you going to listen to Satan?

They answer: - No.

We repeat: - are you going to listen to Satan.

They say:- No.

We ask them: why?

They answer: because he is liar.

Then we explain to them that Eve listened to the voice of Satan and ate from the tree. So, we ask the female young child who performs the character of Eve to pretend that she is eating. After that, Adam “the boy” comes and asks her: what are you doing, Eve? So, she tells him to eat from the fruits of the forbidden tree because it is delicious. Both Adam and Eve ate from the tree, they listened to the voice of Satan and did not listen to God.

Thus, we ask the children again: are you going to listen to Satan?

They say: No.

We ask: why?

They answer: because Satan is liar.

We proceed the story saying that Adam and Eve felt fear after they ate from the tree, so, they hide among the trees. Here we ask the children to hid.

God came and called: Adam, Adam where are you?

Adam replied “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself” God said” Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” Adam said: Eve gave me to eat. So, God asked Eve: why did you eat from the tree? Eve replied: the serpent deceived me.

So, the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust All the days of your life.”

We ask the children: what did God say to the serpent?

They reply: - Because you have done this, on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust All the days of your life.”

Then God said to Eve: - “In pain you shall bring forth children”

We ask the children: - what did God say to Eve?

They reply: - “In pain you shall bring forth children”

After that, God said to Adam “ In toil you shall eat all the days of your life”.

So, we ask the Children “ what did God tell Adam?”

They answer: - “ In toil you shall eat all the days of your life”.

Accordingly, Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise. We ask the young boy and girl who are playing the roles of Adam and Eve to get out yelling and weeping. We proceed that Adam and Eve started to suffer from three things:-

- 1- Guilt
- 2- Poverty and pain.
- 3- Sickness and death

We ask the children to repeat each part of the story, so, it becomes dug in their minds!

I said:- this is a very simple and interesting method of teaching and it makes the children participate in the story not just listeners. It teaches the children all lessons in an indirect way. But we need a special book contains all the stories of the holy bible explained in the above simple way.

So, would you please, father, write down all the bible stories and hagiography in such method as it will be so helpful to all Sunday school

teachers as well as many children? You have a deep psychological and spiritual sight, to do so.

He replied: - God gives us time and support, my son.

Now, let's talk about the third principle in teaching children which is: -

### **3-Repetition and patience.**

In order to let the children memorize something we have to ask them to repeat it at least six times. Fast teaching does not last in their minds.

Once; one of the Sunday school teachers wanted to teach the children "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..." in five minutes. Each week he repeats the same prayer from beginning till end in five minutes, but children can not memorize any of it. For three months he has repeated the full prayer in the same pattern, but in vain. Until another teacher followed the method of repetition and patience. Each sentence is repeated by children for seven times, then each child repeats it individually until they memorize it. Then, he moves to the next sentence in the same way and merge both sentences together and so on. The children were able to memorize the whole prayer in two weeks so easily.

Kids need patience and repetition in teaching them to be able to remember the information.

A Sunday school teacher should be patient in teaching the Bible lessons or verses.

I said: But kids are noisy by nature and it is not easy to control them. How can we make them stay quiet and focused?

He replied: there are three important things to let children focus as follow: -

### **1- Speed.**

I asked: - what do you mean by speed, father?

He replied: firstly, the speed in speech. Psychologists say that ear hears speech four times faster than tongue's speed in talking. A slow talking gives a chance to the children to lose their concentration. But when we speak in an appropriate level of speed, they keep focused and alert. A good preparation to the lessons makes us explain it faster to the kids.

Also, speed in acting. If we use acting to deliver an information to the kids, we will have to be quick so they do not lose their concentration. The slow performance pushes them to feel bored and unfocused.

For instance, one day a teacher wanted to use acting to deliver the information to the kids, so he picked a boy to perform Adam, but the boy was not able to memorize all the sentences that Adam says. So, the teacher focused on teaching the kid how to say the sentences and forgot other children. So, when the teacher finished, it was only him and the boy in the class while other children were distracted and went away.



Our performance should be quick and in case the children were not able to memorize something, so, the teacher should say it as if it is a silent acting. Also, a teacher should be fast in his movements, he should not stand in one corner of the class during explaining a lesson. He should move around to attract the children's attention to him.

I said: - actually speed is very important. A slow instructor causes boring even to adults. But what is the second thing to attract the children's attention?

He replied: - the second thing is to: -

## **2- Look into the kids' eyes: -**

We have to focus on the kids' eyes during the explanation of a lesson in order to know if they concentrate or not and if the lesson is interesting or not. If we do not look into their eyes, we will not know if they feel tired, then we have to summarize the lesson and give them a break, or if they think of something else. And even if a child fights with another one or not. We will know all these issues when we focus on the kids' eyes.

One of the Sunday school teachers had a weakness point as he used to look up the ceiling of the room during his explanation of a lesson as if he was looking to heaven. So, kids become distracted everywhere, but he does not pay attention to anything except telling the lesson! Consequently, he lost most of the children except few of them.

In order to keep the children more focused, we have to look into their eyes to figure out if they concentrate and accept the lesson or not.

I said: - I have never paid attention to this point or even realized how much important it is! Really it is essential to know how the kids accept the lesson more than explaining it.

So, what is the third thing to attract the children's attention?

He said:- thirdly:-

### **3- Quick alert: -**

In other words, it will be necessary to draw the children's attention if they do any noise or make mistakes, but we have to do it quickly in order not to disturb the other kids.

For instance; one of the Sunday school teachers was not interested in drawing the kids' attention during explaining a lesson, so most of the children lost their passion to attend the Sunday school. When he noticed such decrease in the number of kids, he started to warn the kids but in an exaggerated way led to distract the other kids.

So, both ways either neglecting or exaggeration to draw the kids' attention are not correct.

If we neglect to tell them about their mistakes, they will make more mistakes and lose their concentration. And if we offensively warn them, other kids will lose their concentration and focus on warning.

Consequently, reasonableness and moderation in telling the children about their mistakes are very essential not just to let them focus on the lesson, but also to teach them the right and the wrong in a lovely and a friendly way without any fear or terror.

I asked: - how could be the lesson interesting and more practical to the kids rather than being a historical story?

He replied: - there are three principles to make the lesson practical in the children's life as follow: -

#### 1- The practical application: -

For example; in the story of Joseph, we can teach the children how to protect their bodies from sexual harassment and save their minds from impurity.

I said: how?

He answered: we have to teach them to be virtuous like Joseph and to not allow anybody to touch them badly. Same as Joseph did with Potiphar's wife when she tried to touch him, he shouted and ran away. We teach them to scream loudly if someone tries to touch their bodies and to say "No...I am a saint" and we pretend to touch their bodies and we ask them to scream loudly and say" No....I am a saint".

Also, when we explain to them the story of Abraham who left his family and refused to worship the fetishes, we ask them:

- 1-If your father asks you to worship the fetishes, will you worship?
- 2-If your mother asks you to go with her to the sorcerer (1), will you go?
- 3-If you see your parents drink wine, will you drink?

We teach them to be obedient to God not to tradition or community same as Abraham was.

Also, when we explain to them the story of Ruth, we tell the kids that Ruth was a widow, but she kept herself virtuous. So, she was rewarded by God and was married by a good man “Boaz” and became the grandmother of King David and from her progeny Christ was born.

Then we ask them: - what is the secret behind Ruth’s strength?

They say:- virtue.

We ask: will you be like Ruth and keep yourself virtuous?

They answer: yes.

We ask: why?

They answer: we are saints.

Also, when we explain the story of Samson and how he married from the pagan ladies and fell in adultery, thereof, he lost his powers and became a joke to the Palestinians.

Then, we ask the children: are you going to marry non-Christians (2)?

They answer: No...we are Christians.

- 
- 1- Some people may go to the magician and ask for remedy.
  - 2- It is common in some countries and does not cause any problem because they are not aware of the sacrament of marriage.

We ask:- Why?

They answer:- A Christian man marries a Christian woman.

We ask: are you going to fall in adultery?

They say: No..

We ask: why?

They answer: because we are saints.

We ask: will you keep yourself virtuous?

They answer: yes; because we are the sons of God.

I said: it is an amazing method and makes children get benefit from the lesson and apply it in their daily life practically not theoretically.

He said: now, the second principle to make the lesson practical in the children's life is : -

## **2- To make saints a model for the children to follow: -**

I said: how?

He answered: for example, when we talk about Saint Demiana and explain that she was a virgin “nun”, we ask the girls:-

- Who wants to be a nun like Saint Demiana?
- Who wants to be a martyr like Saint Demiana?

Also, when we talk about St. Mark the apostle, we ask:-

- Who wants to preach the gospel like St. Mark?
- Who can leave his family to preach in strange countries same as St. Mark did?

It is written in the Holy Bible “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” “Hebrews 13:7”

When we teach them to follow the saints’ faith, this shall be a significant application in their life.

I asked: then; what is the third principle to make the lesson practical?

He answered: thirdly is:

### **3- Memorize a verse from the Bible:-**

Teaching the children to memorize a verse from the bible which is suitable to the explained lesson and repeating it continuously during the week especially when they face a plight, is very important. This method will help them to memorize a lot of verses which they can use in their war against Satan.

I said: beginnings might be easy, but how can we keep going in service?

He said: yes you are right, continuity is more important than beginning since it is written in the Holy Bible” that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain” “ John 15:16” and also “The end of a thing is better than its beginning”” Ecclesiastes 7:8”.

However, in order to continue in service and bear fruits, we need three things: -



## 1- Prayer:-

Satan fights us in order not to pray, attend the mass or even participate in the choir, but he will fight us much more when we continue in service especially serving the young Children.

I asked: why?

He said: Satan will fight you in general because through your service you save many souls from his hands, you will not only be a defender but also an attacker. So, can you imagine the future of children who have not been taught anything about Christianity?

I said: they will be pagans as the Africans say or “just a Christian” as the Egyptians say. As it means nothing to be a baptized Christian while I do not know anything about Christ or the bible and I do not follow His commandments.

He said: that is true! If we do not care for the children, they will not know anything about Christ and they will not win the heaven and this is Satan’s main purpose. That is why when you take care of serving the children you will be aggressively under fight by Satan. His fight increases against the service of Children because it is easy to shape them and what you grow today in their minds will remain and bear fruits in their spiritual life ever after.

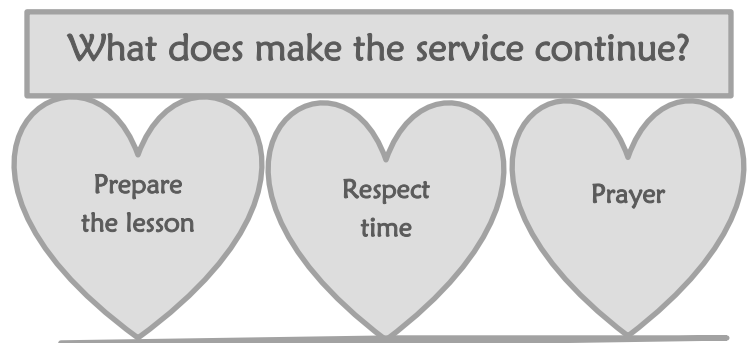
Therefore; we need to pray to God to give us power to continue this service. We pray for kids to be protected by God and we pray for the absent ones too.

## **2- Respect time: -**

When we ask the children to attend the Sunday school in a specific time, we should be there on time otherwise the kids will lose their trust in their Sunday school teacher because he did not show up as he promised. He should exist before the kids and prepare the class and the means of illustrations. So, they will be happy to find him first and he can prepare a small gift to the kid who comes first to encourage the children to attend on time. Respecting time is very important to keep the continuity of the service.

In one of the churches here in Africa, one of the church servants started a class for preparing vergers (Deacons) which was attended by 50 children in the beginning. But due to his very busy schedule in other services, the church servant started to neglect the class, sometimes he comes late and other times he does not show up. Kids have kept waiting for the servant for a long time but eventually they go home disappointed. After sometime, when he started to come only few kids were attending the class but they come late, so he felt disappointed until the class stopped totally.

So, in order to guarantee the continuity of the service, we have to respect time even if it is not respected by others.



I asked: - but how can we prepare a lesson? What are the basics to prepare an effective useful lesson?

He answered: - it is very simple to prepare a lesson to the kids, but it needs time and attention. If you do not prepare the lesson, your explanation will be randomly and unorganized. So, kids will feel bored and will not get any benefit out of it and they won't come to the church.

Thereof; there are five steps to prepare an effective lesson: -

**Firstly: - Specify the characters in the lesson: -**

There is always a main Character in the lesson on which we need to focus and learn from such as Abraham or Joseph. Or a character we need to learn from his/her mistakes such as Samson – Eli the priest and his sons....etc.) and secondary Characters.

**Secondly: - allocate the events and prepare the acting: -**

It is very important to arrange the events according to their sequences and think how we are going to act them. We will find that the lesson is 90% complete when we specify the characters and arrange the events.

### Thirdly: - determine the lessons which could be applied in our life: -

Without the practical application, the lesson will be just a harsh theoretical and historical information. So, it is essential to specify the purpose behind the lesson and prepare the suitable questions which we will ask to the children such as:-

- Do you hear Satan's voice? (The story of Adam and Eve).
- Kids:- No.
- Why?
- Kids:- Satan is liar.
- Will you marry unchristian person? (Samson story).
- Kids:- No.
- Why?
- Kids:- because we are Christians.
- Will you drink wine? (Daniel story).
- Kids:- No.
- Why?
- Kids: because we are saints.
- Who wants to be a nun or a monk? ( St. Anthony story – St. Demiana story)
- Who wants to preach the gospel? ( St. Paul story and St. Mark the apostle)

Consequently, the practical questions and the kids' reply loudly to those questions will establish principles that will last forever and will support them towards the road of heaven.

#### **Fourthly: -memorize a verse from the Bible: -**

As we explained previously that choosing a suitable verse and memorizing it is very important and that verse has to be short and easy. Also, you can help the children to memorize the verse with the witness ( chapter and verse number). Further, the kids can memorize the verse in the shape of a hymn or through acting which will make it easier for them to remember. So, in order to do all of that correctly, we need to prepare the lesson.

#### **Fifthly: - Ask questions after explaining the lesson:-**

In order to keep the information in the children minds, we have to ask them questions and offer small presents to encourage them. questions make children focus on the lesson and it is a method to measure the concentration of each child.

I asked:- what is the suitable way to distribute the gifts to the children?

He answered:- next time we will continue our discussion about how can we deal with the different types of children because there are some children need specific way of dealing such as the sensitive child , stubborn child and the new child.

But now, we are going to sum up all aforementioned speech as follow:-

- **In order to serve the children we have to know their value and the value of serving them as they are :-**

1- Equal the blood of the Christ.

2- The church of future.

3- Easy to be shaped.

- The practical way to serve them is :-

1- The loud voice” acclamation”

2- Acting.

3- Patience and repetition

- How to keep them quiet:-

1- Speed.

2- Look into their eyes.

3- Quick alert.

- How to make the lesson practical:-

1- The practical application.

2- The Bible characters and saints are an example to follow.

3- Memorize a verse from the Bible.

- How does the service continue?

1- Prayer.

2- Respect time.

3- Prepare the lesson.

- How can you prepare the lesson?

1- Choose the characters.

2- The events.

3- The practical application.

4- A verse from the bible.

5- Questions.



- You can get the PDF for the rest of the series through:- [mbade2.com](http://mbade2.com)



- Or you can listen to the parts in a dramatic recording through:- [Soundcloud.com/mbade2](https://soundcloud.com/mbade2)
- Or through Facebook page "**principles of the spiritual life**"
- Or mobile application "**principles of the spiritual life**".

