



Evangelizing Children—

# Breaking the Bubble Gum Barrier

by Dick Gruber

**T**elevision has become the electronic babysitter. One report stated that 850,000 American children twelve and under will be watching television at 1:00 each morning. The average child watches five hours of television each day. Multiply this by 365 days a year, and in twelve years that child has accumulated over 21,900 hours or over 912 days of TV watching. With the kind of moral input that TV gives our children it is hardly strange to witness the deteriorating spiritual condition of today's child.

If the same TV-watching child attends an Assembly of God Sunday School every week for the first twelve years of life, he has been in Sunday School 26 days. Add to that an hour each week for Royal Rangers or Missionettes and two hours for children's church. He has been in church 104 days in twelve years. One hundred and four church days balanced against 912 watching TV. This doesn't seem hardly enough.

## The Call

Are children being won to the Lord in spite of social and media influence? The answer is YES! The harvest field of children is ripe.

Jesus said, "Let the little chil-

dren come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" Matthew 19:14. The order has not been rescinded. We are still in the business of letting little children come to Jesus. When walking this earth, our Lord demonstrated a heart for children. That heart has not



changed in these last two thousand years. God still cares for boys and girls. He still says to you and me, "...do you truly love me more than these...Feed my lambs." John 21:15 (NIV)

## The Barrier

A "bubble gum barrier" has been raised. Sin has raised a

wall between boys and girls and the Lord Jesus. Like sin, bubble gum is sweet, for a while. The bubble looks great when filled with air but has no substance. When under pressure, it bursts. The pleasure of sin is like the flavor in bubble gum. It lasts for a short time. Children are being held behind the bubble gum barrier of sin and destruction. We can make a difference. We can rescue the child from certain spiritual demise.

## Breaking the Barrier

How can we break this bubble gum barrier? Start with prayer. This kind only comes by prayer and fasting. Pray for children, families, schools, the media, the country, the world. Pray that God will give you a new anointing of His Spirit for this important work.

Next, keep working the things that work, like Sunday School, children's church, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, Vacation Bible Schools, kids crusades, and camps. These are still valid ministries that can do much to draw in the nets, winning boys and girls to Jesus.

Explore new possibilities in outreach. Churches are starting Sidewalk Sunday Schools and Branch Sunday Schools. Latch-key ministries and TV and radio evangelism are opening new

doors of ministry. Support groups for abused children, children of divorce, and children with mental or physical handicaps can be initiated.

Call, visit, and write letters to the boys and girls. In a world where they feel lost, afraid, and hurt, you can be a friend. Your church can be a beacon of outreach, care, and security in this darkening world.

I spoke in a children's service in Orlando one night. At the conclusion of the service an altar call was given. One sweet

twelve-year-old girl buried her face in her hands crying uncontrollably. In talking with her I discovered that this was the first time she had ever been to a church. To her, Jesus was just a story people sang about at Christmas time. A friend invited her that night and the bubble gum barrier was broken. That girl found the joy of sin forgiven. How many more American children have never been invited or have never been to a church?

It takes the tip of a finger to burst the bubble. It takes the

power of God evidenced in the work of your faithful hands to break the bubble gum barrier of sin. Do not be weary in well doing. Continue to reach out to the lost children of our land. Statistics look scary, and children in this society stand on a shaken foundation, but God is bigger than societal trends and sandy soil. Jesus still loves the little children of this world. With God's help, more and more children will be won to Jesus. With God's help we will break the bubble gum barrier.

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### Questions For Further Study—

1. What is the "bubble gum barrier"?
2. What is being done to win children at your church?
3. What improvements could be made?