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[Home](#) > [2019](#) > [August](#) > [Blog](#) > [Reaching More Than 80 Kids at Camp!!!](#)

21 AUG 2019 **Reaching More Than 80 Kids at Camp!!!**

1

Mark Blog, Camp, Kids_Ministry

Dear Praying Friends,

Working as the Youth Pastor at Camp is **always wonderful**, and **this year was no different**.

I'll do my best to share what happened so you can be a part of the amazing ways God moved.

You'd think that at a "Christian Camp," we'd get kids that "have it all together."



That's not the case at all!

A large percentage of the kids come from homes where they do not attend church. For them, this week at camp is all they get for learning about who God is, who God says they are, their need for salvation, and how to become a child of God.

Many of the kids, and teen staff, shared with me about their broken homes, the foster care system, the hurts of divorce, and abuse.

I want to share a first that was disturbing to me. Four different young campers approached me to ask a question. All of them 12-years-old and under.

All of them has basically the same question... "What's wrong with men having sex with men and women having sex with women if it makes them happy?"

In my 8 years of Camp Ministry with 8-12 year-olds, this was the first time they asked me a question about homosexuality. The language they used told me two things:

1. Kids are being forced to grow up too fast. These kids are in grade-school!
2. **Kids at a young age are being indoctrinated and bullied into thinking that morality is about what makes you happy.**

My answer to the kiddos (they are young kiddos) was this, "You know how we've been learning that all our problems come from sin? Because of sin, what makes us happy is sometimes pretty messed up. It makes some people happy to rob banks, or to beat people up, or to have sex with the same gender, or to have sex with

multiple people. The question isn't, does this make me happy? The question should be, what does God say about this?"
<https://luke-15.org/2019/08/reaching-more-than-80-kids-at-camp/>

effectively targeting and influencing our very young with dangerous ideas.

Let's definitely be praying for this young generation, and lovingly reach out to them with the Biblical Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ! Let kids be kids.

As Youth Pastor, it is my privilege to preach 11 times each week:

- A 5-Day Series on "The Gospel Through Creation,"
- A 5-Day Series on "The Early Life of Jesus,"
- A stand-alone evangelistic Bible message to close out the week.

These messages are **very powerful** because they're right from the Scriptures. I believe that kids are very intelligent and can understand Theology if it is explained to them, and that was definitely the case this summer. **So many kids reacted so positively to the Word of God and the Gospel Proclamation!**

Over **80 kids**, plus a dozen+ Teen Counselors attended camp the week I taught there.

A handful of kids publicly testified to repenting of their sin and trusting in Jesus as their Savior! Praise God!

Many more confessed to not living the Christian life they should and **committed to turning from idols in their lives**. Please keep these new brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers, and let's praise God for the tremendous work He's done!!!

I believe Jesus is working healing in a lot of kids. Eternal healing by being saved from their sins, but also temporal healing by coming to grips with their brokenness and pain. And they've learned that they're not alone. Many were introduced this week to their Loving Heavenly Father who wants to comfort them. And they learned they have peers going through similar struggles.

I'm really proud of Shelby and the kiddos. Shelby once again helped run the Horsemanship program. A lot of kids come to camp just to be with the horses, so this is a great draw. Shelby did a lot of physical labor carrying around hay, saddles, buckets, etc. Vivienne wasn't planning on helping in the barn, but they needed her help with a horse, so she volunteered for a week. Caleb volunteered as a "Staff Boy," where he did jobs like mowing the lawn, getting rid of garbage, etc.

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever" (Psalm 136:1)

God's Word is powerful because God is powerful!!!

I have some photos that will also show how God moved at camp this summer. I pray you enjoy these...





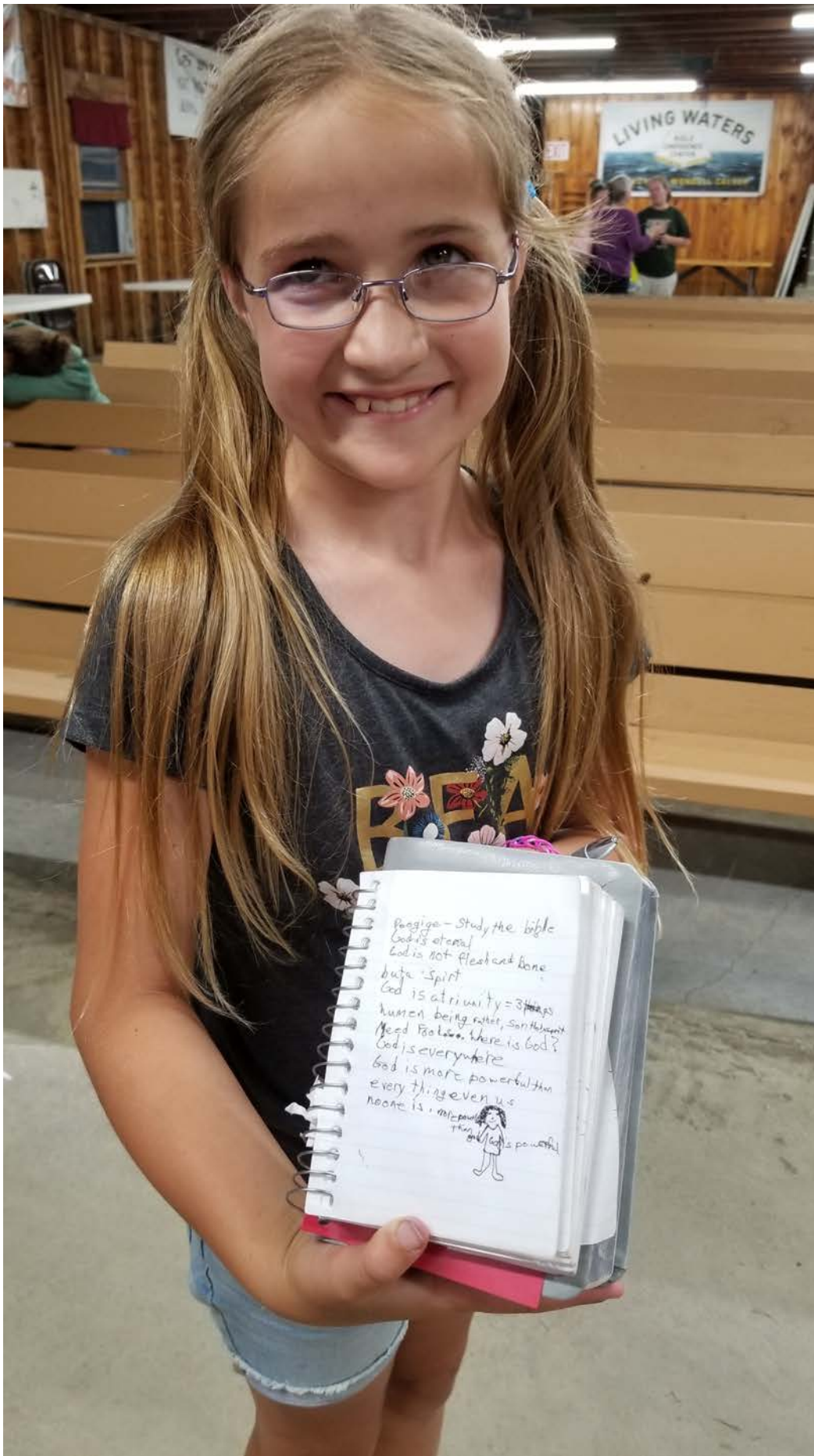
On our way to camp - a six+ hour drive!



The Cafeteria holds and feeds a LOT of people. There's another wing to the left that I didn't capture in this photo filled with kids.



The Counselors regularly prayed for the kids.



How awesome is this? This is Rhianna. She's 10. I taught a heavily Theological message on the attributes of God because I have this crazy belief that kids are smart and can get it. After the message, precious Rhianna came up to me to show me the notes she took. Wow! Just wow! Thank You Jesus!!! ♡



Seeing the kids learn to worship God in song is really amazing.



This is Hailey and she's 12. (She's also shy and didn't want her face in the photo.) She told me that she made her craft based on what I was teaching. That just melted my heart. It says "Let Him Have Control" and there's a 3D cross made from nails and string.



When I'm done with each message, they get posted on the wall, so the kids can check them out whenever they want.

Here's the 5 paintings from the "Creation" Series.



And here are the 5 messages from the "Early Life of Jesus" Series.



This is Jesse, and he's my FAVORITE Camp Counselor. Want to know why??? He got this WICKED AWESOME TOM BRADY Funko Pop for Christmas, knew I'd like it, and saved it for me for 7 months and gave it to me on the first day of Camp. Wow! Was I willing to accept such a gift from a teenager? You betcha!!! :)



The Campers competed against each other all week, and the winning team got to decide which Camp Staff has to get a pie in the face. Shawna won (or lost - depending on how you look at it.) But Shawna was a good sport about it!



Caleb is notorious for not letting me get photos of him working as Camp Grounds Staff. This was the best I could get.



The Friday Evening Campfire Service is always powerful. So many Campers gave tear-filled testimonies of abuse, abandonment, brokenness. A bunch professed faith in Christ!!! A very sobering and powerful service.



This is Chumly, and I took this photo because I really liked his t-shirt. I really like him too!



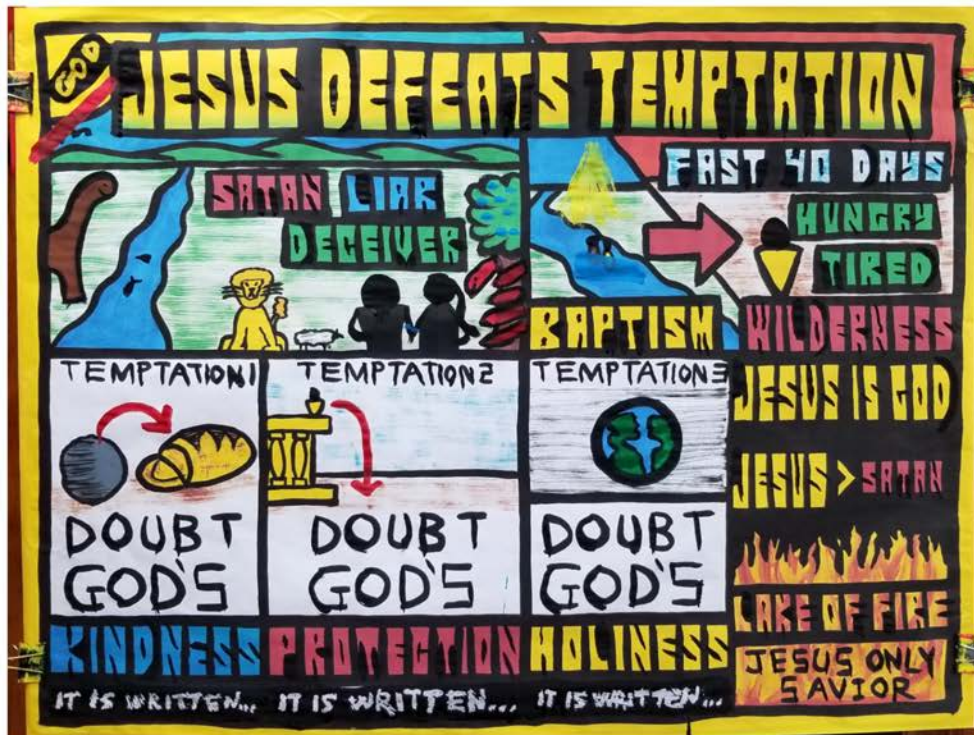
These amazing kiddos! These are the kids I was privileged to teach last week. A number of them told me they put their faith in Jesus! These kids are 8-12, and many shared their stories of abuse, neglect, being tossed around the Foster Care System, losing a parent through abandonment or death. My heart breaks for the brokenness, especially at a young age.

Please pray that the week at camp and hearing The Word of God will make a difference in their lives. Thanks and God bless you!

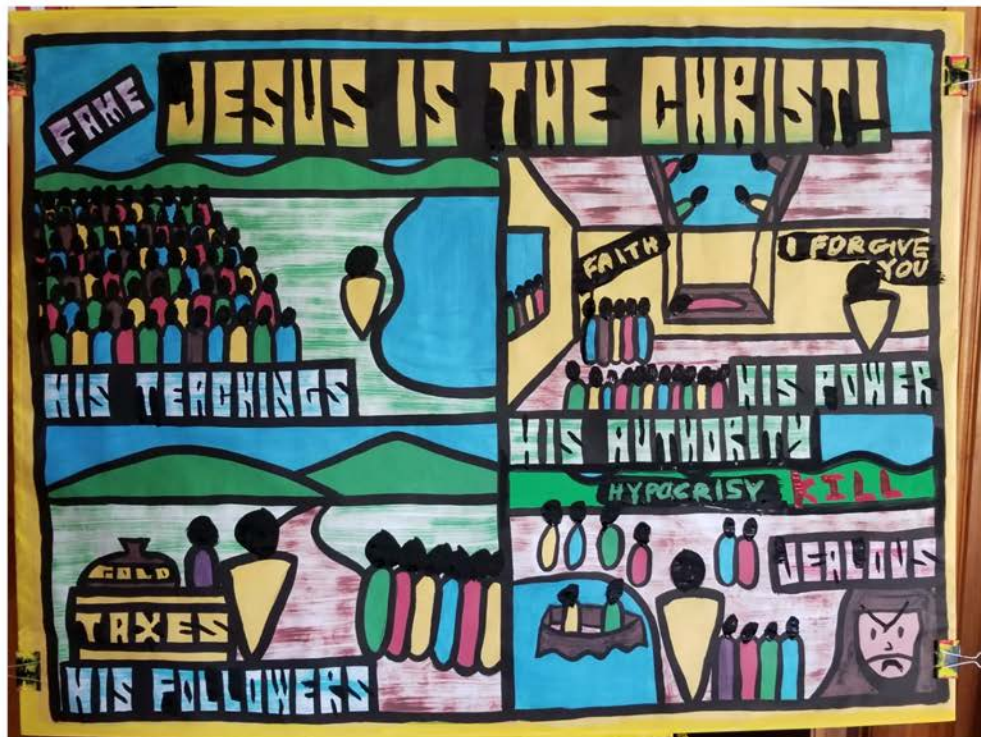
In the mornings I taught a 5-day series called “The Early Life of Jesus.” The before and after photos, as well as descriptions, are below:



Part 1 in a 5-part series on "The Early Ministry of Jesus." Jesus' birth is unlike anybody else. Jesus is God, and took on human form through a virgin named Mary. This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy written 800 years before Jesus (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus was called Immanuel, which means "God With Us." Instead of being born in a luxurious palace, He was born in a simple wooden trough in a dirty stable. Jesus came to earth humbly. He left the earth humbly on a simple wooden cross. Magi from Babylon met Jesus when He was about 2 years old and knew about the King of the Jews most likely from the Prophet Daniel. When Herod found out there was another "king" born, he was so angry he tried to kill Jesus, and slaughtered all the boys under 2-years-old in order to accomplish this. But God protected! Being warned in a dream by an angel, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fled to Egypt. Not the wonderful introduction to the world one would expect from the King of kings, but Jesus did many things that were unexpected. I thank God for a great first session in this series.



Part 2 in a 5-part series on "The Early Ministry of Jesus." Here are the "BEFORE" and "AFTER" paintings. We learned that "In the Beginning" Satan successfully tempted Adam to sin, with disastrous consequences. Adam was humanity's representative, so all of us are under sin. After Jesus' baptism, Satan tried to tempt Jesus to sin. Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness and, in His humanity, was hungry and tired. Still, Jesus, being perfect, successfully defeated Satan's temptations, each time using Scripture to thwart the enemy. What Adam couldn't do, and what you and I can't do, Jesus did! JESUS DEFEATED TEMPTATION! Jesus is God, and greater than Satan. Satan is destined for the Lake of Fire, and so is anyone who belongs to Adam's family. Jesus will be our Deliverer if we are adopted into His family. How do we get sorted into Jesus' family? We'll find out in upcoming lessons.



Part 3 of 5 in the "Early Ministry of Jesus." This lesson showed over and over again that "Jesus is the "Christ." "Christ" isn't Jesus' last name. It's His title. It means "King." It means He's "in charge" of us and everybody and everything. Jesus gained fame through His teachings and His power. Thousands came to hear Him. He taught the same things we teach from the Bible today. He showed amazing power. One day a home where he was teaching was so packed with people, that some people opened up the roof to let down a man who needed healing. Jesus saw their faith by their actions, and healed the man, and forgave his sins. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus is God. Jesus picked special disciples. He even chose despicable people like tax collectors. God can use and change anyone! But there was a traitor within the disciples. Judas was a hypocrite. He looked like he was following Jesus on the outside, but not on the inside. We must never be hypocrites ourselves. The religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and wanted to kill him. It's an honor to teach these children such important Bible accounts!!!



Part 4 of 5 in "The Early Ministry of Jesus." The Religious leaders at the time of Jesus thought there were two things you needed in order to be "right" with God: you had to have the right birth (be Jewish) and you had to do good deeds. Jesus met with a religious leader named Nicodemus and told him that "You Must Be Born Again." Jesus pointed out that our first birth is actually sending us to death because we all come from Adam. And Jesus used an allusion to Numbers 21 to point out that our "good deeds" aren't as good as we think they are. We NEED a second birth. Our first birth puts us into the family of Adam. Adam was a sinner, and so all his children inherit his sin, leading to the Lake of Fire. We must be ADOPTED into a second family, the family of Jesus. Jesus was sinless, so those in His family are seen as righteous, and that leads to Eternal Life. How are you adopted into the family of Jesus? I told the kids that I'd share that tomorrow, or they could ask me or a Counselor.

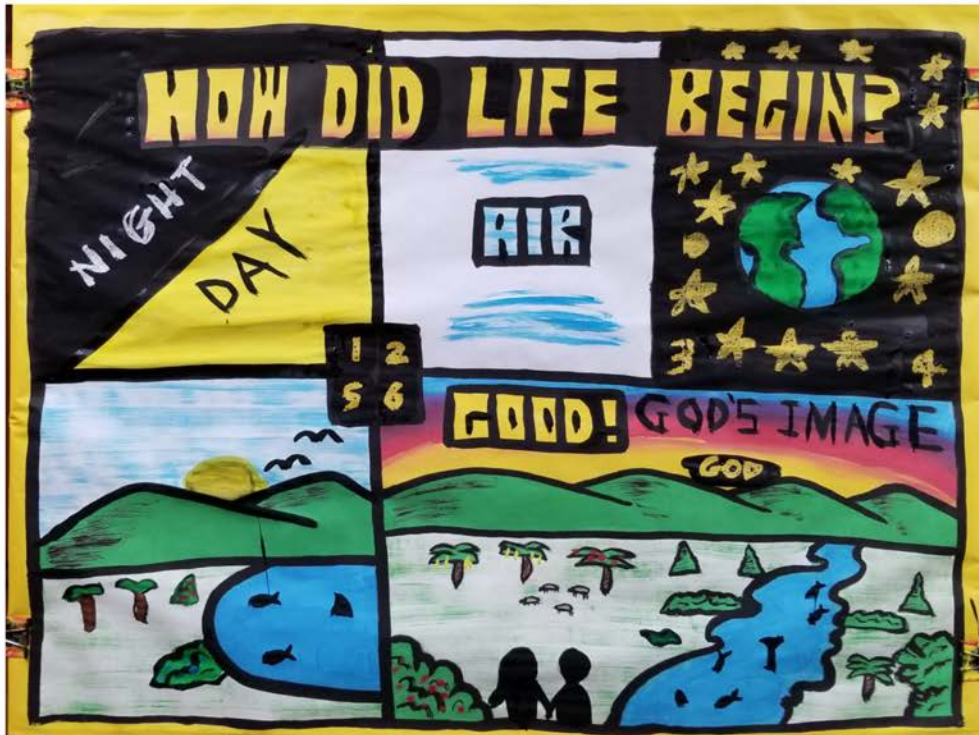


Part 5 in a 5-part series on the "Early Ministry of Jesus." This message teaches about Jesus feeding 5,000 and walking on water, proving that He is the Lord God. When Peter came out into the water and started to sink, he cried out to Jesus, "Lord, Save Me!" That is what we must all do! We are all drowning in sin and only Jesus can save us. Jesus gave His life on the cross and rose again, defeating death, the grave, and sin! He was seen after His resurrection by over 500 witnesses for 40 days. If we turn from our sin and trust the good news, we will have eternal life! Great news!!! Thank You Jesus!

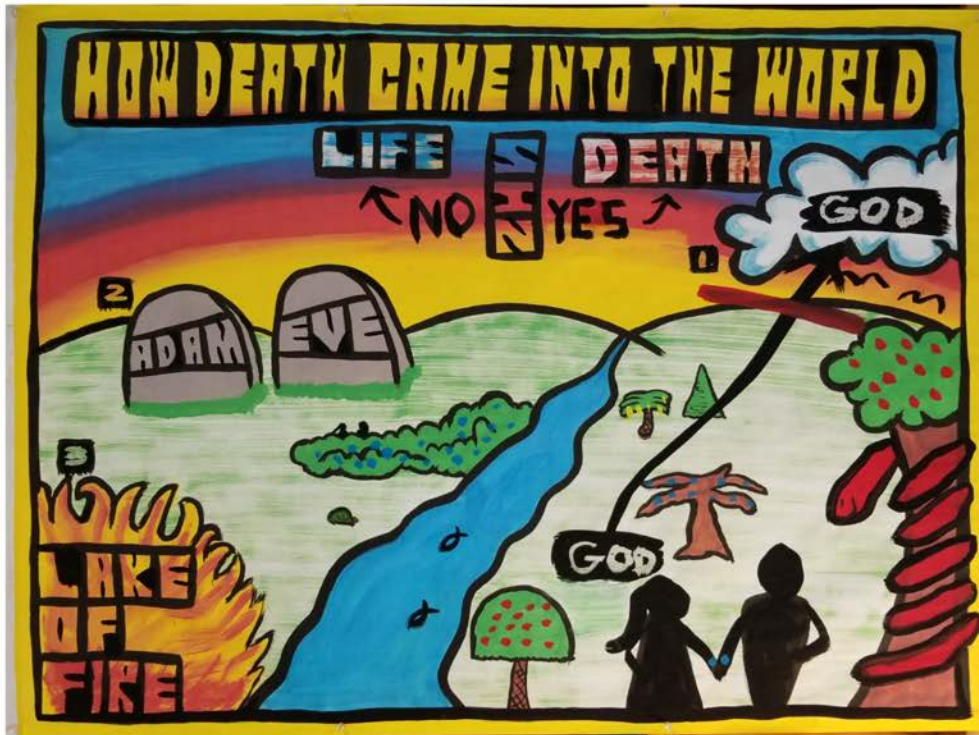
In the evenings I taught a 5-day series called “The Gospel Through Creation” The before and after photos, as well as descriptions, are below:



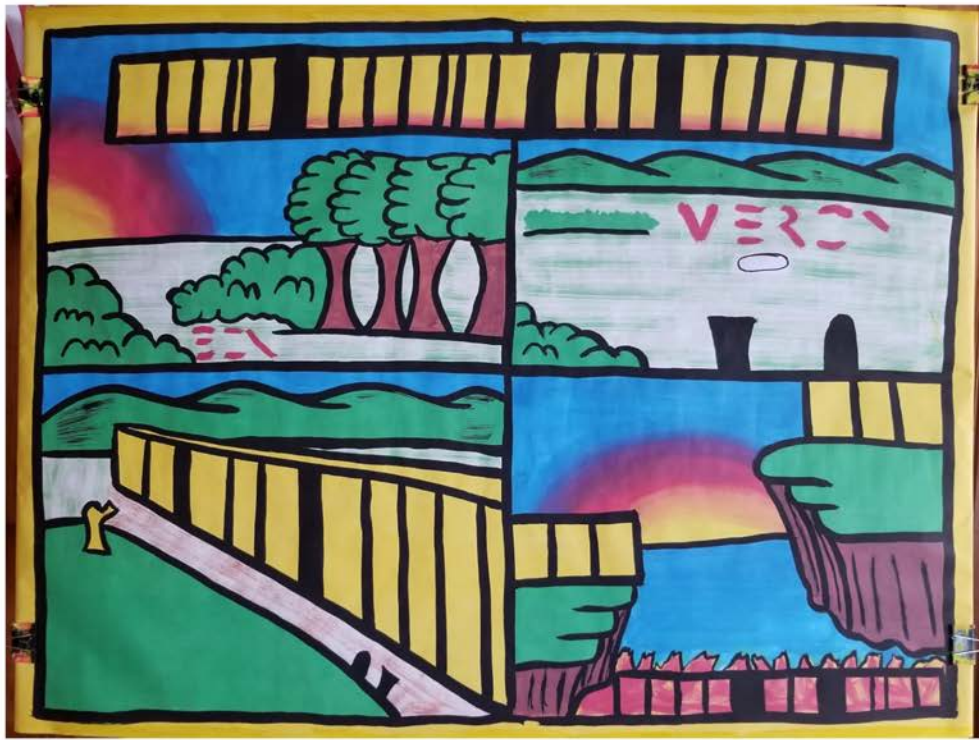
Part 1 of a 5-day series on "The Gospel in Creation." I believe kids are smart and can understand Theology when explained to them. So we learned God is "Eternal," meaning He always existed and always will. We learned that God does not have a body of flesh and bones, but is a Spirit. We learned that there is only 1 True God, and He exists in Three Persons: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. We learned that God does not need anything. He is self-sufficient. We learned that God is omni-present (everywhere at all times), and that God is more powerful than everything! Great Theology there, and the kids really "got it."



Part 2 in "The Gospel in Creation." We learned that God is soooo powerful, He can make things from NOTHING! That's pretty amazing. And we learned how life began, and what God made on each of the six days of Creation. We also learned that out of all of creation, humans are the only ones made in God's image, which means, like God, we can reason and analyze and make decisions. At the end of the 6th day, God saw that it was "very good." But why aren't things good today? We'll learn that tomorrow.



Part 3 in "The Gospel Through Creation." We learned "How Death Came Into the World." Adam and Eve had only one rule, and they said "yes" to sin, and that led to death. The whole human race died three ways: 1) We were cut off from God, our life source. Just like when a branch is cut off from the trunk, it begins dying, the same thing happened to us. Now God is not our friend, but we are enemies of God through rebellion. 2) We will all someday die physically. 3) We all deserve to live forever in the Lake of Fire. Our only way out is through a Savior. I told the kids that they'd learn about God's way out - The Savior - tomorrow!



Part 4 in "The Gospel Through Creation." We learned that as a result of breaking God's Law, Adam and Eve were now ashamed, and afraid of God. They had never experienced these negative emotions before. Then they started blaming one another, another new aspect of their relationship now that sin was in the world. But God was merciful! He made leather skins to cover them, and that requires the death of an animal. The very first death ever was a blood sacrifice by God Himself. God also promised to crush the head of the serpent (Satan). But there were consequences to Adam and Eve's rebellion. The worst is that Paradise was lost, and without a Savior, all humanity is doomed for the Lake of Fire. The greatest news ever is that God provided Jesus as a substitute to die in our place, paying for our sins with His blood!

More on that tomorrow!



Part 5 in "The Gospel Through Creation." Today we learned that God demanded a blood sacrifice because sin must be paid for with death. Abel obeyed and offered a blood sacrifice in faith. In contrast, Cain did what seemed right in his eyes and gave a produce offering. God accepted Abel. Cain had the opportunity to admit what he did was wrong, but instead he tragically killed his brother. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the animal sacrificial system. We can be like Cain and do what is right in our own eyes, and get what we deserve - the Lake of Fire. Or we can be like Abel and believe God, and choose a blood sacrifice - Jesus Christ. Jesus' blood sacrifice covers us if we turn from our sin and trust in the gospel!

There was a very clear gospel presentation and everyone was exhorted to turn to Jesus. Please pray for the kids who heard this vital message!!!

On Friday night, I taught a stand-alone Evangelistic message called "Heaven." The before and after photo, as well as description, is below:



My final message at Camp. Heaven is God's Home, and it's a place where there is no sadness, sickness, or death, because there is no sin there. But the BEST PART about Heaven is that we get to finally see Jesus face-to-face and be in God's presence forever! Jesus is our Treasure! The Book of Life records the names of all who will be allowed to enter. But first we need to understand why we don't deserve to go. God made the world perfect, but Adam disobeyed the one rule he was given, bringing sin and death to humanity and the world. Now God it's no longer our friend, but our judge. But He's merciful and loving, so God gave Adam and Eve leather clothing. Leather required the death of an animal. An innocent animal was killed to cover the guilty, and a precedent was set. God requires a blood sacrifice for sin. The death of that

animal was killed to cover the guilty, and a precedent was set. God requires a blood sacrifice for sin. The death of that animal was a picture, or a preview, of what Jesus would someday do. The blood of bulls and goats can't take away sin. God sent the PERFECT FINAL SACRIFICE, Himself. God came down, lived a perfect sinless life, and sacrificed Himself on the cross to pay for the sins of those who repent and believe. Two thieves were crucified along with Him. The first disrespected Jesus, while the second was humble, acknowledging his wrong, and looking to Jesus to enter His kingdom. These two thieves represent two kinds of hearts: one that trusts self, or one that trusts Jesus and the cross. Which person will we be like? Jesus died on the cross as a substitute for us, and he was buried, and in the third day rose from the dead. He commands everyone to repent of their sins (turn), and believe the gospel (trust). If we do or not is literally the difference between eternity in the Lake of Fire, or eternity in the Kingdom of Heaven. We must be Born Again through repentance and faith! Then we get to go to Heaven, not because we're a good person, but because we're a bad person who has been forgiven by a very good God. That's grace! And God becomes our Father now and we can walk with Him by faith all the days of our lives.

I hope this post has encouraged you. **God is working in the next generation!!!**

Thank you for your partnership, prayers, and financial support, without which we could not be reaching the lost for Jesus Christ!!!

Please share this update with others you think would be blessed by it!

all for Jesus,

Mark (and family)

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