

## Why I teach Sunday School By Stacy Bartholomew

You are a pastor's wife who cannot play the piano—that's why you teach. Wrong. You have three kids in the children's ministry program, and it is only fair that you volunteer. Not a bad reason actually, but wrong again. I teach Sunday School because I am often overwhelmed by the busyness of life; I grow discouraged by my sin and the sins of others, and one of my frequent prayers is that God will give me a front row seat into His work in someone's life, that I might not lose heart.

This year, that front row seat is in a classroom of fourth and fifth graders, where the Holy Spirit shows up week after week, in ways both great and small, revealing God's continuing and mighty work in an often overlooked corner of his kingdom. Each week brings new insight for all of us. "You mean the big fat books are called the Major Prophets because they have a lot of pages, and the skinny ones are called the Minor Prophets 'cause they don't have as much stuff?" Well, that is one way to put it!

In teaching, as well as parenting, I have learned two things. First, children experience every struggle I too encounter, though not always in degree or kind. They struggle with fear and greed; they crave approval and want desperately to be loved; they grow discouraged by their own sin; they mourn over friends who do not know Jesus, and they worry about the future. Sound familiar?

The second thing I know is that God's word meets children and changes them the same way it changes me. Last week our group gathered in a circle on the floor, each sprawled around his/her own Bible, each searching a different Psalm, practicing "seeking God", asking ourselves what each particular Psalm revealed. During his turn one young man looked up and said, "Sometimes I just want to feel like I matter, like I am important. This Psalm tells me that no matter how I feel, God says I am important to him and that makes things different."

There are moments when the Infinite draws very close and startles those of us who make a life out of talking about just such events. I knew that his insight was not from me. "You are right," I whispered, "It does matter."

Children are capable of conversion and deep faith. Could the front row seat into God's transforming work which you are so diligently seeking be found down the hall, in the Children's Department? Come and see.