



BOOK REVIEW // SHOW THEM JESUS

JACK KLUMPENHOWER // REVIEWED BY CASSIE WATSON

Jack Klumpenower

SHOW THEM JESUS

Teaching *the*
Gospel to Kids

How well are you going at teaching children about Jesus?

Whether you're a kids church or youth group leader, a teacher or a parent, you'll agree that kids need to know about Jesus. But what does this actually look like? How can we teach about him well?

Jack Klumpenower has given us answers to these complex questions in his book *Show Them Jesus: Teaching the Gospel to Kids*. In the first half of the book, Klumpenower explains over several chapters why it's so important to teach the good news. He charts a course for us that avoids pitfalls like moralism, cheap grace, and therapeutic religion.

Statistics show an alarming number of people who grew up in the church leave Christianity behind as young adults. Klumpenower suggests an explanation:

They look back and realize that they learned much about Christian behavior and churchy experiences, but whatever they learned about Jesus didn't really change them. They never saw him so strikingly that he became their one, overriding hope and their greatest love. They were never convinced that Jesus is better—a zillion times better—than anything and everything else. (3-4)

It's sobering to consider the kids we work hard for every week may not actually be hearing the good news they desperately need. And so, *Show Them*

Jesus is an urgent corrective. We need to think about whether we're teaching and running our ministries (or households) in a way that helps kids to gaze upon and love our Saviour.

TEACHING JESUS FROM THE WHOLE BIBLE

After setting the foundation of what the good news is and why we need to teach it, Klumpenower shows us *how* to do this. In two excellent chapters, he explains how to teach about Jesus effectively from the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Naturally, people are more familiar with how to teach Jesus from the New Testament—he's right there on the page! But this book still offers fresh insight, like the helpful questions we can ask of each passage: What do we learn about (1) the work of Jesus and (2) the person of Jesus? Klumpenower helps us to slow down and meditate deeply on a passage, hunting for what it teaches us about our Lord—rather than just looking for moral lessons in the stories or characters.

Many readers will make a beeline to the chapter on teaching from the Old Testament. Here, Klumpenower provides us with three sets of questions that we can apply to different passages: looking for what God does, who God is, and how Jesus solves problems. Since first reading this book, I've frequently applied these questions in my own Old Testament reading and found them to be richly illuminating.

One reason I greatly appreciated these chapters

on teaching the good news is that Klumpenhower encourages us to have a full-orbed picture of Jesus. Rather than making a trite connection to Jesus at the end of an otherwise moralistic talk—so the ending always sounds the same—he shows us how we can teach on Jesus for the rest of our lives and never exhaust his beauty. Each Bible passage give us a different glimpse into the glorious person and work of our Saviour—so let’s teach about him in all his richness too.

BEYOND TEACHING TIME

Although we do need to work hard at teaching the Bible well, that’s not enough. Kids need to hear the good news in a “good-news environment.” The very culture of our groups or homes (not just our teaching) needs to be sin-aware and grace-aware. It needs to have a focus on the heart and help kids to find Jesus delightful. Klumpenhower illustrates what this can look like from his own years of ministry experience.

Klumpenhower devotes a whole chapter to considering prayer, which he presents as a crucial

battleground for all who teach children about God: “We can expect the devil to attack our prayer lives. If he can get us to avoid prayer, we’ll be flimsy teachers. We’ll be hypocrites—telling kids to trust God while we actually trust ourselves and telling them how wonderful God is while we treat him as unworthy of our time” (182).

This was convicting and it made me ask myself, “Am I praying for my youth group in a way that shows I expect God to show up and work through is Word?”

By the end of this book, I loved Jesus more, and I felt better equipped to help my youth group kids know and love him. Through the many examples of how to teach various Bible stories, I saw Jesus as the perfect Saviour, the promised King, the Good Shepherd, the gentle Healer. Next term at youth group, my team is planning to teach from the Gospel of Mark. After reading *Show Them Jesus* and discussing it together, we’re praying that Spirit will work through our teaching to make Jesus more and more lovely in the eyes of our teenagers.

KIDS NEED THE GOSPEL TOO

You can challenge the culture of low-stakes, low-expectations teaching and make a radical ministry pledge—to do nothing less than teach and treasure the Good News of Jesus. Let Jack Klumpenhower show you how to put the gospel front and center every day in your teaching of children and youth. His how-to, gospel-centric approach will complement and enrich existing lessons or teaching materials and help teachers and parents to make the most of every teaching moment, whether in the classroom or at home. Appropriate for teachers and parents of children and teens in any setting.

“Sunday school curriculum is relentlessly moralistic. That is, it tells you *what* to do, but not *how* to do it. Jack Klumpenhower shows us how by taking us back to the person and work of Christ. Every Sunday school teacher should read this book.”

PAUL MILLER, Director of seeJesus; author of *A Praying Life* and *A Loving Life*

“We want kids to know about Jesus, but we leave them with lessons about behavior and they leave the church as soon as possible. Here’s a book that sweetly, masterfully, and powerfully tells us what the gospel really is and how it can really change a child’s life and eternity.”

BRYAN CHAPELL, Author of *Christ-Centered Preaching*; pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church in Peoria, IL

“*Show Them Jesus* is a must-read for every youth worker, children’s ministry teacher, parent, and VBS volunteer. Jack Klumpenhower does a masterful job helping us learn how to discover the gospel connections in every Bible story. This is the perfect training tool for pastors and children’s ministry leaders to use to train their teachers. I’ll be buying a copy for all my children’s ministry leaders.”

MARTY MACHOWSKI, Family Life Pastor, Covenant Fellowship Church in Glen Mills, PA; author of the *Gospel Story for Kids* curriculum

JACK KLUMPENHOWER is a Bible teacher and a children’s ministry curriculum writer with more than thirty years of experience. He has created Bible lessons and taught children about Jesus at churches, camps, clubs, conferences, and Christian schools all over the world, including Serge conferences. Currently he is working on a middle-school gospel curriculum in conjunction with Serge staff. He lives with his wife and two children in Durango, Colorado.

cg New Growth Press

Serge
formerly
WORLD &
HARVEST
MISSION

COVER DESIGN BY
Faceout Studio, Emily Weigel
COVER IMAGERY
© Shutterstock

ISBN: 978-1-939946-39-3



9 781939 946393