

## 2. I have needs but I can't tell you what they are.

Why can't children tell you what their needs are? We don't speak the same language. Oh, it's almost the same as me not speaking Italian or Czech.

Your one year old is crying. He's trying to tell you something but all he can do is cry. You don't know what he needs. So you start guessing. Is he hungry, did he poop his pants, is he tired?

Your four year old is biting other children. She's trying to tell you something, Is she saying to you, stop that! Or, I need attention. Or I'm feeling angry.

Your 8 year old gets into fights with other kids every day at school. What is he trying to tell you, You're not giving me enough attention at home? Was somebody just teasing him and that's the only way he knows to react? Did someone humiliate him, like tell him he could be in the game but then changed their mind?

How about your teenager? When she was a young girl, she was sweet and happy. Now, as a teenager she is always crying or screaming or ignoring you. What is she trying to tell you? My feelings get hurt very easily and I don't know how to deal with it. I am having a hard time keeping up in school but her older sister didn't.

The children in our families, the children in our churches, the children in our schools and the children of our world are trying to tell us that they have needs. As Parents, teachers, church workers and Believers, we must know what children need if we are going to help them.

I'm going to talk to you about some general needs that all children have and then some specific ones that we need to know.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-4** The Jews in Jerusalem were very poor and need help. So Paul was asking all the churches to give to this Cause. The Macedonian church heard about this (they were a very, very poor bunch of believers) and this is what Paul tell the Corinthians.

8 We want you to know, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia,<sup>2</sup> for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.<sup>3</sup> For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord,<sup>4</sup> begging us earnestly for the favor<sup>[b]</sup> of taking part in the relief of the saints—

There are many Scriptures that tell us that we must meet the needs of others. But I think this Scripture is particularly important, because the flow of money and food, came out of a group of people who had almost nothing.

Some of you may feel like you have very little to give to the children. Maybe you don't feel worthy to teach the children because you never had much education. But the children are crying out to us – please, I need something. I'm not sure what it is, but could you help me?

Louis Raths, the German Educator came up with 8 needs of a child

1. The need to belong
2. The need to achieve
3. Freedom from fear
4. Love and affection
5. Freedom from guilt
6. The need to contribute
7. The need to know and understand
8. The need to excel – or be the best

**The need to belong.** Be part of some kind of community. The family provides that, in school it's the classroom, in the church, it's your Sunday school class or children's church or kid's club that meets. Right there, we can meet that need.

**The need to achieve.** In the classroom it's met with learning in stages. First the child recognizes letter, then words, then he can read sentences, In math it starts with counting, then adding, the subtracting, then dividing. In church it's called Discipleship. We learn about God and our relationship with Him in stages. (Marianne worried that she could not explain heaven to her child well). She won't get it now, I mean, which one of us really gets what heaven is like. Are the streets really made out of gold? Or is it just so magnificently beautiful that that's the only

way the author could describe it? But as a child is Discipled, she learns how to be more like Jesus and a light in this world. That's achievement.

**Freedom from fear.** Here's a list of things that school children are afraid of. Little ones are afraid of different things, but most of us work with school aged children.

- Snakes and spiders
- Storms and natural disasters
- Being home alone
- Fear of a teacher who's angry
- Scary news or TV shows
- Injury, illness, doctors, shots, or death
- Fear of failure and rejection
- Monsters, ghosts and other supernatural beings

I can't tell you what to do if you have a kid that's afraid of spiders or even natural disasters, but I can tell you how we can meet the needs of children who have a fear of failure and rejection.

We are believers. We have a great God who is always with us. He wants us to finish the race well. If we do fail at something in our lives, and we will, that does not make us failures. Do you hear me? If your marriage failed, if you got fired from your job – you are not a failure. God has a plan, and He can take every rotten thing that's happened to you and teach you something that will make you a better person. Always, every time, each negative thing that happens to you, every dark moment, every mistake, every single time you are stopped from continuing, God is with you.

And if we teach that to our children, they will grow up not fearing failure or rejection or any other dark place. If you know the same God that I know, you can do this for your children. Or, they will be afraid of the the same things you are

(Barbara's story)

Perfect love casts out all fear.

**Children need love and affection.** I hope I don't have to say much about this. We need to love our children, even the difficult ones. Even more the difficult ones. I've worked with kids for a lot of years. I know that you sometimes pray that certain kids don't come. Like the twins. You know who I'm talking about.

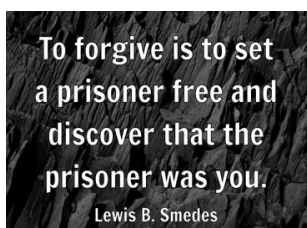
But these children, the ones who are needy, the ones who are "trouble" – they are the ones who need your love and the love of God. And a little affection – a little good touching can mean so much. A hand on the shoulder. A pat on the back.

**Freedom from Guilt.** I am going to try and explain the difference between guilt and conviction, because guilt is bad and conviction is good. Guilt is what you feel when you do something wrong, Conviction is what you feel when you do something wrong. The difference is, there is no way out of guilt. It seals the thing you did inside.

(jar illustration)

But conviction comes from God who also brings forgiveness. A way out of a relief. We must let children know there is forgiveness in Christ and there is a way to ask others for forgiveness and to forgive others.

I know there are some of us here that like to make kids feel guilty when they do something wrong. After all, they did something wrong and they should feel bad about it. But that is not our job. Our jobs are to lead children to Jesus, and allow them to know His forgiveness so they can go to Him when they are really sorry.



The need to contribute. Everyone needs to feel like they are contributing to the whole. That they are giving something to the community. If this is true, and I believe it is, you are the one that has to allow that child to feel like he is contributing.

- Wow, I never saw such beautiful grass in a picture.
- It's so great when you share like that.
- How nice that you noticed Alise did not have a snack today and you shared yours.
- I love that you're always ready to pick up the garbage.

It doesn't take much. It's a thank you wrapped in a beautiful package. If a child feels like he really contributes something good to the group, you have met a basic need with doing so little.

**The need to know and understand.** This is the whole picture. This is why we reach and teach children so they will know and understand God, so they will know and understand that God has a plan for their lives, so that they will know and understand that there is a good life here that is abundant and an eternal life with Jesus that will never end.

If we can't meet this need of children, we are in the wrong line of work. I won't say anything more about this need.

The last one:

The need to excel or be the best. I think this is part of our human nature, not our spiritual nature. The Spirit of God tells us that we should take the lowest place at the table. That we should prefer other above ourselves. But our human nature says, we must try to be better than the other person. Knowing this, we must teach the children to be their personal best. The best that they can be in whatever the particular situation is.

And shouldn't we always do our best?

Ecclesiastes 9:10

<sup>10</sup> Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

Colossians 3:23-24

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Today, all these are still true. But depending on which country you live, the children in those countries have different needs than the children in another country.

So the important thing here is to know the needs of the children in your country, in your town or village, and meet those needs.

If you are from a very poor area, you may have to feed the children before you can give them spiritual food. Imagine seeing a child who is dying of starvation laying in the street and they are asking for some bread or water and you stoop down and tell them about Jesus. First give them bread and then tell them that Jesus loves them.

Remember, children are easily influenced. If a clown walked into your village or town with hundreds of balloons, how long do you think it would take for a crowd of children to be following that clown.

If a Magician set up his tent in the middle of town, how long do you think it would take him to have a crowd of children?

If a follower of the devil put on a good play in your town, how long would it take for the children to listen to what he has to say.

Children are easily influenced. We have to be the influencers. We have to have the loudest voice. We have to get those kids before somebody else does.

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Today, many of us have a similar problem with children. Or maybe I should say a similar problem with meeting the needs of children. Many of the countries here have an influx of women and children from Ukraine.

I know that many churches and believers are trying to help as much as possible. And I think that's great.

If anybody's interested, I have a small team of people that will come to your church and train your volunteers on how to use art and drama with children of

trauma – the children who have been displaced. I will give you a card and you can contact me. Or talk to me at this conference.

Europe is in a difficult place. I read that we have not seen a refugee problem like this in Europe since WWII. More than 2 million children CHILDREN have been displaced from Ukraine. And they've come to you.

This need is right in front of all of us.

Remember the church in Jerusalem, that I started with? And the Macedonians who were so poor but they gave generously anyway? We have to be like the Macedonians. It might not be money that God is asking us to give. But it might be

- Time
- Energy
- Effort
- Creativity
- Friendship
- Prayer
- And most of all, people need Jesus.

If you need God to help you to meet the needs of your children, raise your hand.