



Tech Trash Evangelism

Stories 1 through 11

Book 1 of 2

Leader Guide

by James 'Gramps' Curtis

ReachingYouth.net

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An Introduction to SpaceAGE Clubhouse stories:

I have lived inside my clubhouse stories (Tech Trash Evangelism) for a quarter of a century. It is certainly thinking outside the box when you begin explaining to someone they can get more 'power' out of a junk computer that's not plugged in, than when it was brand new and all lit up on your desk. In a God-thinking world, I believe the emphasis should be less on computer skills and programs, but more on using the computer parts as metaphors for disciplining others in salvation and spiritual growth.

The 'clubhouse' theme is the Minor, which holds all the episodes together. The Major themes are:

1. Providing common ground (technology) where two diverse generations (students and seniors) come together without intimidation. Nothing is 'plugged in' so nothing can be broken, deleted, or messed up.
2. Using 'zero budget' junk to share one's faith and understanding self as well as our Savior. This I refer to as 'Tech-Trash Evangelism'. It should work just as well in a church basement or a jungle clearing. It requires no skills, upgrades, or corrections. All age levels can be introduced to this concept.
3. The SpaceAGE Clubhouse stories can help set a tone where technology and testimony merge without being drowned in commands, procedures, and even requires no reading skills. This genre is truly unique since it provides a contemporary teaching method that, in my estimation, surpasses the drums, dinosaurs, cowboys, that some church curriculum may be stuck in.

The SpaceAGE acronym says a great deal.

Students Promoting Accountability in Computing and Evangelism, Always Godly Efforts

I am pleased to have completed this series of stories, which provide a new way to separate Message from Methods. Young persons need new approaches in their search for spiritual strength. Using my definition of 'unplugged technology for evangelism' is the whole purpose of SpaceAGE Clubhouse.

James 'Gramps' Curtis

Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. Ps. 71:18

[end]

Overview—In the beginning, there was an idea, young people, a Pastor and God.

1. Clank – Clank – Clank – Clank

It was definitely getting louder... and closer too!

Clank – Clank. It sounded just like one of those monster army tanks; the ones with the big cannon on the front that could pulverize a house in one blast.

Tom rubbed the last of the sleep from his eyes, trying to clear his head and figure if this was real or was he still dreaming. With his keen eyes, as the teenage watchman that he was, he scanned the room he had spent the night in. As the tank noises got closer and scarier, he saw all the computer parts nailed on the walls of the dilapidated building the Computer Junk Jockies Club had been using to train its members. Before he could grab his old sweatshirt, the tank driver gunned the engine and let out a roar louder than the fiercest lion you could imagine.

Only a few seconds later the first terrifying crash came – or was it an explosion?

Tom jumped to his feet, one shoe on and the other off, and raced out the door away from the explosion. What the computer club watchman saw next really floored him. Instead of a monster enemy tank it was actually a humongous bulldozer beginning to destroy their clubhouse classroom. Tom waved his arms frantically to get the dozer driver’s attention and finally did.

Tom spent a few minutes getting his breath and explaining their terribly important use of the old building as a classroom for learning about computers and God Who had given them to man... and uh ... boys. It was then Jake the dozer driver pulled out his cell phone and called someone named Penny. The instructions were to “bring your camera, and that little tape recorder you sometimes use in History class.” He then gave Penny the location of where they were at. Penny was Jake’s teenage daughter and she’d be there in about fifteen minutes. Tom looked down at one shoe on and one missing. No time to waste, he had fifteen minutes to find his other shoe and shake the dust from his pants.

After hearing all the hard work the boys were doing in learning the details of computer innards, Jake wanted his daughter to take pictures of all the parts on their “classroom” walls. Before Jake continued to demolish the old building, Penny read into her recorder all the writing on the classroom walls. Beneath each computer part nailed to the wall were two columns of notes. One column was “stuff we know” and the other column was “Gotta find out”.

Later that day the worst was learned. Tom decided it was even worse than hearing there was going to be no summer vacation; school was just going to keep going. This was worse! Penny is an organizer. Can you believe it? The last thing the boys in the club figured they needed was an organizer. Tom could just picture Penny in their old classroom. He bet she’d find three cockroaches; line them up and give them names.

Getting organized? Yuch!

That evening Tom told Ben all the terrible news. Ben needed to know all the horrible details, because he was the club pres and main teacher. Ben didn't quite see the club being crashed by an organizer or that now a newspaper would be wanting to know more. He wasn't quite sure but something intrigued him about others knowing how the club was using old computers, and to learn about how they worked. His greatest joy was always to be able to use most every computer part to teach fascinating truths about God and all He has provided for those who love Him and wished to serve Him. Ben's insides felt good, knowing the lists Dean (the club scribe) placed on the walls, would not be lost. The club's future was in shambles just like the old building when Jake got through with it.

There was one thing Ben knew for sure. That part of a Bible verse kept swimming around in his head as he helped his dad the rest of the week. Sunday evening Ben's youth pastor listened as Ben explained all the troubling events, and how he thought Satan was trying to destroy the club as the classroom had been. The youth pastor opened God's word to Phillipians and read:

“ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”

Ben learned that day that we must always remember our friends as we talk to God in prayer, and thank Him for ALL that happens. Even though it might not appear to be what we want, still... God is in control. He always is.

“Ben! Your Youth Pastor Called.”

“He'd like to see you right away... over in the church basement.”

When Ben got there, he was greeted by Pastor Tony, Penny, and Dave Tipps. Dave was the sparkplug within the youth

group and the right hand man to Pastor Tony. After all the introductions were ended, Pastor explained to the whole group what he understood about the Junk Jockeys school. With no shred of sadness, he related the facts he had been told about the destruction of the old building and how Penny had gotten photographs and all the information off the walls by reading it into her tape recorder. Pastor asked the group for other details so he could preserve the whole story.

Now Pastor began, “You have heard in our church youth activities how God never destroys sincere efforts to tell others about Him. In fact, the opposite is true. At first it might appear those ministries may be destroyed by Satan. But when we truly believe God is in control, we must always think and act as though we believe that, down deep inside.” That said, he opened his Bible to 1Kings 17. Everyone scooted to the table where Pastor gently smoothed out the pages of the Bible.

“God gives every one of us an important message about Himself or what He is going to do. We must obey and keep on sharing that message no matter what our opinions of the circumstances are. Elijah had a dangerous job telling the wicked King Ahab about the judgment of drought God was about to put on the earth. As soon as Elijah delivered God’s message, he skedaddled out of the palace. Well, Then Elijah had no place to live, food to eat, nor belongings with him. Yet he had obeyed God. We read that God fed Elijah unlike anyone had eaten before or since. Big birds with six foot wingspans brought him food twice every day, by the brook called Cherith.

But then the brook dried up; sort of like your computer classroom that had to be demolished by Penny’s dad’s bulldozer. Did that stop God’s plan? Did God have to switch to His emergency plan B? God doesn’t have any alternative plans because everything always happens according to His plan. Elijah was led by God to stay with a widow and her son. The Bible says they were about to starve before Elijah arrived. Things had looked bad for Elijah, didn’t they? Because Elijah obeyed God and the

widow lady obeyed Elijah, God’s incredible provision was shown again.”

Pastor Tony summarized, “when you read the rest of this seventeenth chapter you will see how God kept filling up the food pantry, and even brought the widow’s son back to life. Before we discuss some ideas, we need to first realize we are obeying God by first looking in His word. We’re obeying God by seeing His magnificent provision especially when we think there is no solution. We are obeying God by sharing with others truths about Him and how much He loves us. Just before Pastor went to get something from his office, he asked the group to ponder a question. It was, “Do you think it’s possible God let the classroom be destroyed because He had something better in mind?”

What do you think? When problems appear in front of you, do you turn tail and run? Do you get scared and blow your whole Christian testimony? Do you suppose God already knows about that problem and is anxious for you to ask Him how HE wants you to deal with it? [end]

Overview—In the beginning, there was a man called “Gramps” who had a vision.

2. Pair Of Bulls

“**IT’S SO WEIRD. SOME MIGHT SAY IT BORDERS ON SCREWY,**” thought Ron Baker as he walked toward the almost condemned building. His preteen son told him that Mr. Davis was going to have a pair of bulls in the store. Ron arrived at the old building to see silver haired Grady Davis in a chair outside. It was tilted back against the wall of what had been a small clothing store of many years before.

As Ron walked up, Mr. Davis made a couple more cuts on the piece of wood he was whittling. His eyes stayed on the wood, but his face created a smile. “I bet you’re another neighborhood

parent who thinks I'm putting a pair of bulls in this old building. Is that it?"

Ron offered his handshake to the older haired gentleman still seated before him. "I suppose you can have bulls or goats about any place you want. My name is Ron Baker. I care a whole lot what interests my 12 year-old son, Mark. And you are on that list."

Grady ended his carving and pocketed his well-worn knife. Like short commands being printed from a computer came, "My name's Grady Davis, but I much prefer 'Gramps'. Take a look in that little store window. Tell me if you see any animals, bulls, straw, or grain buckets." Gramps still didn't make eye contact with Mark's dad.

Ron did as he was told, and replied, "Other than a couple boxes, it looks empty." Gramps lifted his gaze to the clouds and stroked his gray beard, thinking hard about what he was about to say. "I seem to recall a story about a loving father – probably a lot like you and your concern for your son. The story says this father had a pair of bullheaded sons. They didn't want to listen and they didn't want to learn."

The wrinkled-skin Gramps continued Ron's lesson. "The story of this loving father is written in the Bible and was told by Jesus Christ, Himself. This story He told, is referred to as the 'Parable of the Prodigal Son.' Mr. Baker, I want you to continue looking at my old store. What do YOU see? When I look in there, I see boys and girls learning all sorts of parables – short stories that help them learn how much they are loved! Each child deserves to learn about that love of Jesus and the incredible Gift of Salvation on the Cross for all to see."

"Ron, I want to use little stories – parables – the youngin's can share with their friends. I use broken parts of computers with the parables." The light came on in Ron and lit up his smile. He pointed at Gramps and exclaimed, "You're gonna teach Mark and his friends COMPUTER PARABLES, aren't you?"

"Well-l-l-l-l sort-of. Rather than raising bullheaded boys and girls, I want to show them how much their hearts and lives mean to God. They need to know their potential, even without

fancy clothes or fancy computers. And I want to see this old building alive with a heartbeat for showing the danger of computers too. Since we'll be using broken and homemade stuff, my silver haired friends will want to be involved too."

Ron clearly became excited. "Gramps, this is going to be fantastic! I'll make sure my son, Mark, tells me every computer parable."

WOW! No time for whittlin' now! Here comes Gigabyte Gramps and the Computer Parables!

[end]

Overview—A lesson learned includes not to judge others by first impressions.

3. Drawings Good and Bad

His teeth were chattering badly; Bob couldn't remember when it'd been worse. No. It wasn't cold and he wasn't scared. It was the railroad tracks. He said, "Todd. I'm never going to let you take this train-track shortcut again while I'm riding on your handlebars." When Todd doubled back under the train trestle and down the embankment, Bob thought he was a gonner.

Surprise #1 came when the two boys rounded the last curve and spied the house. Matt and his mom lived in a house that was little more than a shack in a really remote part of the county. They had no telephone and there was no evidence they had electricity either. The questions in Bob and Todd's minds were really piling up. But the important thing was that their youth pastor asked they visit Matt and invite him to the Computer Missions Club next Thursday.

First impressions by the boys were that Matt would be better not to be bothered about all this computing stuff since it looked like Matt may not have a computer let alone use it for missions and church. Little did the pair realize the exciting

revelation God had in store for them today - that was to be surprise #2.

Bob's grandfather cautioned both the boys, in situations like this to, "Don't judge a book by its cover." He often said, "First impressions are most important, yet not always correct."

A couple raps on the rickety screen door brought Matt greeting the boys with very few words. The three teens sat on the front steps as Bob and Todd told a little bit about themselves. Matt didn't speak much but listened with great interest. Todd began to tell some about the Computer Missions Club at church with a lot of enthusiasm. Matt reached out and picked up a piece of scrap paper lying on the porch not far from him. From his ragged shirt pocket he pulled out a broken piece of pencil and began doodling as the boys talked.

In no time at all Matt handed Bob the finished sketch he had done while listening to the boys. It was a simple drawing that included a cross, a computer, and a couple older children. They were arranged in a way you could almost make an emblem or a logo of it. Bob almost knocked Todd off the steps in his excitement over the sketch. As Matt saw the joy his creation had made, he took it back and above it wrote, "Computer Missions Club".

The hoots and excitement prompted Matt's mom to peer through the cracked front window. The three boys spent more time bouncing around ideas about using Matt's apparent art skills as a tiny business of creating much needed computer missions clipart.

Peddling back home took a slower pace amid real remorse in Bob and Todd's hearts. Both certainly drew the wrong conclusions about Matt's home and abilities. Though they were both grateful to God for bringing Matt into their friendship, continuing thoughts brought examination of other lives, which had crossed their path. Were they too quick and 'cruel' in making hasty judgments of others?

Nearing their homes, Bob and Todd agreed between them they were going to put a logo on their hearts that said something like, "Others are never mats to be trampled by quick judgments, but provisions by God in interesting wrappers.

[end]

Overview—The clubbers come together as a team, beginning with parts, then in song.

4. Clock Conductor

“I DON’T THINK WE SHOULD DO THIS. They’ll throw us out,” said one of the preteen clubbers to another. This was their debut too. Their silver haired club leader, Gramps, made eye contact with each of the six or so members of the Computer Club awaiting their cue to walk single file to the platform.

Paxton Community Church was not large, but it was packed with small town folks who had a bone deep desire to learn more ways for families to share their faith and love in Jesus Christ. Eddie was the first in the procession to the platform. He wasn’t worried about forgetting his words, but rather never finding another shoelace for his other ragged tennis shoe.

Eddie remembered something he heard Gramps say in club once, “Go with what God gives you. It’s always more than enough.” He thought there might be someone in the crowd who had God’s salvation and peace missing from their heart. He hoped the clubbers could tell them about it.

Everyone was in place as Gramps introduced the clubbers and began explaining they were learning about TechTrash Evangelism. “We use computer parts to learn about God’s great love and His plans for us.” Gramps barely said, “God defines beautiful as FAITHFUL and not FANCY,” when John began singing a Bible chorus. Not five seconds later Lucy started singing another song. In another moment two other preteen clubbers joined in with their own song.

Everyone watching was thinking things had gone out of control. Then Gramps pulled out his musical baton and gave a few quick taps on the microphone. The man in the back of the room ripped his earphones off, promising his ears not to put them back on till the clubbers and Gramps went home.

Gramps pointed at the line of club members with one hand and raised the baton high with the other. As the baton came down, all the clubbers sang in practiced unison, “For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son, to die on Calvary’s tree. From sin to set me free. Some day He’s coming back. What glory that will be. Wonderful His love to me.”

When the chorus ended, Gramps faced the audience and asked, “Were you worried at first? It’s not hard to see when people are not allowing God to be in control...especially, young people.”

Penny quietly stepped forward and waited for a nod from Gramps. With one hand she covered the small rip in her dress. Her other hand held up what looked like a quarter, for all to see. “This is a battery that every computer uses. It gives power to the computer CLOCK circuit.” Barney took a step forward and said; “Computers are always doing several things at once.” He accepted the baton from Gramps and stood behind one of the clubbers who sported a sign that said, ‘Monitor.’

Barney held the baton over the monitor sign and said, “The computer clock talks to the monitor, the printer, mouse, keyboard and the whole computer, so they all work together.” Other clubbers were pointed to, as their sign was mentioned.

Billy leaned his cane against the podium as he scanned the audience. He said, “Most groups of things and people must have a clock circuit or conductor to keep them in time with each other. No matter if it’s a family or committee, or a church family with its pastor, a nation, or a choir...each must have a conductor – a leader.”

Little Nenee walked up to Barney with a tiny homemade train conductor hat on crooked. She motioned Barney to hold the microphone to her mouth. With a determined hand on each hip she took a deep breath staring at the microphone. In a stern tone she said, “Jesus is my conductor!”

The applause was so great as Gramps nodded to the pastor. They had finished their presentation.

A few days later Gramps got a letter from the Paxton pastor. It asked, “How soon can you come again, and show us more exciting ways to tell others ‘Jesus loves you’?” [end]

Overview—Eyes which truly see, come from the heart of God, and is a lesson to learn.

5. Computer Eyes

“Did someone put a bomb in our clubhouse? What’s all the commotion for?” someone said as they entered the nearly condemned building used by the SpaceGate Computer Club. Another clubber who arrived earlier said, “There’s no bomb. But it’s worse yet. Gramps has misplaced his glasses again.” Gramps, as the clubbers affectionately called him was actually the owner of the old building. His love for the preteen clubbers knew no bounds. But still, the glasses had to be found.

Not much time passed before the glasses were found and given to Gramps. This was a perfect time for the silver haired senior to share a bit of his long-ago computer wisdom in the shadows of God’s light and majesty. He made an offer to the clubbers, “If you’ll gather around me and settle down, I’ll tell you about computer eyes that really work.” The older gentleman was aces at story telling to young and old.

He began, “Ok. How many eyes does a mouse have?” Someone teasing in the back blurted out, “Two eyes, one mouth, and a tail.” Gramps replied, “No. I mean a computer mouse.” The clubhouse turned silent as a graveyard. “Do you clubbers know every computer mouse (of the style with a ball in the bottom) has two eyes that actually work? One eye senses when we move the mouse forward and backward. The other eye tells the computer when we move the mouse left and right. It’s true. These mouse eyes are more correctly called photoelectric eyes. Some years ago we used them to open doors etc.”

He continued, “It’s almost sad though. These mouse eyes aren’t able to see the wonderful things of God’s universe. Eagles can see much farther than humans. Cats can see much better in darkness. Fish can see clearly under water. Spiders have eight eyes... But you know what?” Gramps leaned toward the clubbers

just a little and took off his glasses and cleaned them on his shirttail. Not one in his audience moved a muscle.

“But you know the best part? God loves each of us so much; He reserved the best eye design for you and me. Unlike a computer we can read God’s precious Word anytime we want to. We can experience the colors of a sunset or a rainbow. I especially like to see a smile come on the face of a person who realizes someone truly loves them, just the way they are. Maybe you’ve heard me use the phrase ‘bone-deep smile?’ Well that’s what I’m talking about. Our precious God has given us eyes to watch out for our friends and encourage them to not set their eyes on things that would ruin their testimony.

King David who killed the giant wrote good advice for us in Psalms 101; “I will set no wicked thing before my eyes.”

Like the building of a musical crescendo he stood to his feet, leaned toward the clubbers, his stare becoming intense. “And for those who’ve invited Him into their hearts and becoming saved, He gives them an even better pair of eyes. Those eyes will come with a whole new body designed to enjoy their Savior one day in Heaven forever more.

[end]

Overview—Gramps said skin color or diseases did not stop Jesus from loving each person.

6. Computer Skin

It was pretty hard to describe. You really had to see it for yourself. Gramps was sitting in his favorite chair leaning up against the wall of the old computer clubhouse. He had just finished whittling a toothpick and began to use it. It really thrilled him to watch the preteen clubbers cleaning up their makeshift clubhouse. Oh how he loved seeing children gratefully using things around them, just like this old building they loved to come to.

Jamal, a young African American boy finished his chore and walked over to the older gentleman. Gramps knew Jamal wasn't much for talking, and sadly, some people didn't care what he had to say. That was all right. Gramps was good at being a mentor to these young lads. He waited to see if Jamal had something on his mind.

The silver haired man silently prayed for the right words then led Jamal over to the trash barrel. Gramps pulled out a metal box that was once a computer. He and Jamal carried it back to a table away from the other clubbers. The older gentleman stuck his large red handkerchief in the top pocket of his bib overalls as a signal to other clubbers. It meant, "Stay away. Don't interrupt. I'm busy."

The clubbers watched as Gramps asked Jamal to lay his dark skinned arm on top of the computer box. Then Gramps placed his own arm on top of the box alongside Jamal's arm. The older man told the watching group he was comparing the computer skin (metal box) with Jamal's skin, and his own. Sure they were different colors. Like humans, computers also come in different colors. Does it really matter, as long as what's inside works well? The teacher repeated the point more than once.

We can hardly begin to describe the wonders God designed into our skin. Our skin covering holds all the hairs of our body. (And God has each one numbered too.) Little openings allow us to sweat when we get hot. Our skin tells our muscles to shake when we are cold. Our skin does a fantastic job at plugging cuts and telling us when bruised. The Bible tells about a dreaded disease of the skin called Leprosy. The verses in Leviticus 13 even describe the appearance of the skin disease.

Little Jamal then pointed at Gramps arm, noticing scars and skin blemishes. The older gentleman explained to the group that wrinkles and scars were the result of a life of living and loving. Gramps pointed up several times and helping them understand Jesus would have healthy new bodies for all those who say they love Him, as He takes them to Heaven one day.

Gramps told them Jesus loved each of them more than anyone else could. [end]

Overview—Each of us is like a motherboard, important on the inside, like the heart of Jesus.

7. Computers and Whittlin’

This Saturday’s SpaceGate Computer Club had already started when its leader, Ben realized he had forgotten to bring the motherboard with him (it’s the largest part inside every computer). While the clubbers busied themselves with one thing or another, he would run the block or so home and get it.

As he left the almost condemned building he spied Mr. Davis sitting in a chair tilted back against the outside wall. He had his old worn out knife whittling on a piece of wood, always while club was going on. Everyone figured he was listening through the wall to all the neat things the clubbers were doing, enjoying their laughter.

Mr. Davis, “Gramps” as he liked to be called, had a very warm heart for the club and the way Ben was teaching them how important they were. Gramps choked up more than once, when he remembered he’d almost torn the place down. And it continually amazed him to think the club was using his old building to teach about computers. It didn’t make any difference to the boys and girls they didn’t have a computer that worked, or that the clubhouse had no electricity.

Ben returned to the clubhouse huffing and puffing with the junk motherboard in his hand. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Gramps wasn’t whittlin’ any more but was down on his knees. His folded hands and head resting on the chair showed he was praying. And Ben was sure his prayers included each and every one of the clubbers.

Gramps didn’t care most of the clubbers only had clothes other folks had given away, shoes with missing laces, and some with mussed up hair. The older gentleman with silver hair saw past all that, understanding the exciting potential of these boys and girls. God does that, you know. When you see things from God’s

Word you realize He isn't impressed with the outside of things from people; you learn to look on the inside too.

Ben held up the motherboard to all the clubbers and began teaching them things about computers, themselves, and God. He spoke about the insides of computers and that its cover really wasn't that important. Even if it had scratches, dents, screws missing, or dirty, it made little difference. What was really important is what was on the inside.

Ben held up a piece of discarded cardboard with part of a Bible verse, which the club would soon be memorizing. It said, "...man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart 1 Samuel 16:7b." Almost after saying those words, he thought of Gramps outside the old wall praying for the precious clubbers Ben was teaching.

Now the best part of all this is that a few weeks later, Gramps was seen in his whittlin' chair outside the SpaceGate Computer Clubhouse with cranky old Zeb Hicks. I'm sure Gramps wasn't teaching Zeb how to whittle. Do you suppose Gramps and Zeb were thinking about starting a SpaceGate Club for Seniors? Do you care about the insides of people as God does?
[end]

Overview—Working in sync, same as Gramps pacemaker operated, encouraged the clubbers.

8. Computing With Heart

“What was all the applause about?” Jerry wondered aloud as he arrived at the computer club's old building where they held their meetings. The last couple meetings had been pretty gloomy since Gramps, their leader, was taken to the hospital with sirens screaming. The clubbers felt their heart and joy had left in the same ambulance.

The spirit and sound level of the club had certainly changed as Jerry saw in the middle of the computer clubbers, a wheel chair

carrying a tired, and weathered silver-haired gentleman. The preteens were all asking questions as Zeb, the only other senior in the group, kept telling the boys and girls to back up and give Gramps some air. Marsha summed up the feelings of the clubbers as she said, “Gramps, if you ever get taken away in an ambulance again, we’re going to climb in and stay with you.” Those words of love did far more than wheelchairs or any of man’s medicine, to carry their mentor down the road to recovery.

The boys and girls loved every second they spent with Gramps and his story-lessons about computers and God’s indescribable love for young hurting hearts, and old ones too. Everyone sat cross-legged on the floor in front of the wheel chair absorbing the quietness. All eyes saw Gramps bow his head and lead the children in prayer, praising God for His generous gifts. The young people, with eyes closed, linked each of their hearts to Gramps in praise to God and His Grace.

After the amen, Gramps told the clubbers about the pacemaker doctors put into his heart to help the bottom half beat in sync with his top half. He described the size and battery and wires now doing life saving work in his body. He now carried a computer on the inside of his body, as he carried a message of love and forgiveness to all. These missionaries-in-the-making, drank in everything he said.

Gramps scanned the dozen or so preteens and saw much more than mussed hair, dirty fingernails, shoe laces missing, ripped dresses and missing buttons. What almost broke his heart was thinking of other challenges they had to endure. It included missing parents, almost empty refrigerators, quarreling grown-ups, and heckling from their more fortunate classmates.

The silver-haired club leader opened his Bible with all the care that two arthritic hands can have. The boys and girls took great comfort in Gramps being able to find computing principles and God’s promises all in the same book written by the Creator of all that is.

In words any young person could understand, Gramps used computer parts in describing how everything had to work in sync. Each school computer part had to mesh with all the other parts. In

somewhat the same way his pacemaker makes sure his heart's upper and lower halves were working in sync – in tune with each other. Gramps said, “We need to watch out for each other---not to find fault but to be of help, to be a pacemaker to the hearts of our computer club.”

He turned a couple more bible pages asking, “Wouldn't it be fun to be a little mouse in the corner of the room where Jesus was praying to His Heavenly Father? Well, this wonderful bible lets us do exactly that.” The clubbers shuffled up closer to see the very words Gramps was pointing to in John 17. “Here Jesus is just about to be nailed on the cross for OUR sins and look what He prays to His Father for. Clubbers, at this most desperate time in His earthly life, HE'S PRAYING FOR YOU AND ME! All through His prayer He makes requests for OUR peace and OUR unity. Did you get that? He wants our hearts to be in sync with each other just like my pace maker is doing right now. Now I want to ask you, can you be a pacemaker helping the hearts of those around you? He has given everyone of us the things we need to be a pacemaker and a peacemaker, in this troubled world. There's no time to waste. Our directions are right here in His precious word.
[end]

Overview—Doing a good job is important for self-pride and, for Jesus.

9. Cutting Corners Really Hurts

“OUCH! THAT COMPUTER CUT ME!” Everyone looked in the direction of the injury. Judy held her injured finger in her mouth, giving evidence the wound was more sting than stain.

‘Gigabyte Gramps’, with his bright silver hair was the leader of a dozen or so preteen clubbers. The Computer Junk Jockeys clubhouse was actually just an old dilapidated building with no heat or electricity. But thanks to God's goodness, the clubhouse had become an after-school heart hospital for youth with

tested souls and troubled spirits. “Call me Gramps,” he often told the club’s visitors.

Gramps wanted to be nowhere else in the whole universe than this old building. The retired programmer relished nothing greater than whetting the curiosity of these less fortunate boys and girls and planting good seed from God’s Word. With his best grandfather skills, Gramps showed his concern for all troublesome happenings in each clubber’s life.

Three days of each month, clubbers created Tech-Trash Evangelism Kits for inter-city missionaries to use. This month they were building God’s Power Box kits. The insides of computer power supplies were used to teach children how much God loves them, and how to share their faith with others.

Jake began by removing the small power supply from one of the many junk computers stacked in the corner. He then gave it to Nancy. She cut off all the long wires and cables, before passing it on to Tommy.

Nancy often had to hide her face till her tears ceased. As she watched worthless computer parts become powerful tools for missionaries, Nancy felt her own life become important to God. Boy, did she ever need that.

Tommy made the most noise in the little assembly line for missions. His job was to use a file and remove any sharp edges from the metal case. Martha and Jack prepared the cardboard boxes the Power Box kits would be going into. There were labels to put on the outside, with the printed stories and skits to be arranged and neatly packed inside.

Gramps had been showing them how to pray as they were assembling, and that God would bless the missionary leaders who used the kits. The name, God’s Power Box would show everyone the kits would certainly be packed with prayer.

Gramps now spoke to the clubbers sitting on the old wooden floor. He reviewed with each clubber exactly how their job was to be done, especially how to use the tools safely etc. Tommy admitted to Gramps and the group he felt sort-of responsible for Judy getting her finger cut, since it was his job to file down any sharp metal edges. Tommy looked at Judy and then

at Gramps admitting, “I thought if I worked faster I could get more done. I guess I wanted to kind-of show off, about how fast I could do my job. But I now realize I sacrificed the safety of us clubbers AND those on the mission field who might get hurt also.”

In a forgiving tone Gramps asked, “Tommy, even if no one did get hurt, don’t you think Jesus sees how well you are doing your job? Do you agree that it hurts Him when we don’t do our best? I have a question or two for all of you clubbers. Do you think Jesus did His best to do the work His heavenly Father sent Him to do? Would any of us have salvation if He didn’t?”

We may never know consequences for not doing our best, when we work for the Lord.

[end]

Overview—Like firemen everything has a purpose, but preparation is most important.

10. Fred the Forgetful Fireman

Gramps began one of his wonderful old yarns that kept the boys and girls on the edge of their seats. All the SpaceGate Computer Clubbers loved the white haired old gentleman and the simple but important things he taught them with his stories. He continued with the forgetful fireman.

“Late one night the super loud alarm sounded waking all the firemen up. They jumped in their clothes and one at a time grabbed the shiny pole and slid down to where the bright red fire trucks were ready to race out the big doors. As the firemen started putting their boots and hats on, they heard a painful “Yeeeoowwww!” Everyone looked in the direction of the yell to see Forgetful Fred sliding down the pole with out his long pants on.”

The clubbers all laughed so hard they about shook the almost condemned building they used for the clubhouse. Gramps continued the story...

“Fred finally got his special fire pants, boots, coat, and hat then jumped on the fire truck just in the nick of time. I’m telling you it was the funniest thing you’d ever see in all your natural born days. That big red fire truck racing down the street with its siren screaming for all the cars to get out of the way. And one of the fireman, who else but Fred, fanning his pants because his legs felt they were on fire themselves.”

It took a moment or two for all the clubbers to calm down from Gramps’ story. He got a serious look on his face as all eyes were on him. “We giggle at Forgetful Fred the Fireman. But he teaches us a very important principle to live by. We need to think about what we are about to do next and know they are important. When we sit down to the dinner table and pick up our fork, we know how important it is to begin with table grace. We thank the Lord for our food and those who have prepared it. We ask God to bless our eating that we might honor Him with the strength we get from it.”

The boys and girls all nodded in agreement.

“I’ve been watching and listening as Ben teaches you clubbers fun stuff about computers and God. Computers are extremely powerful machines. They can do bazillions of wonderful things. But they can also do wasteful and terrible things too. So as sure as I’ve got silver hair on my head, I believe we should all begin every computing task with Computer Grace.”

“To do safe and productive computing we must first THANK God for giving us all good gifts, including computers. We must ask Him to GUIDE us in how we spend our time on the keyboard. And we must ask Him to GUARD us against going to websites and chat rooms where we know that God is not honored. Then we should ASK that He use our skills at computing to His honor and the salvation of souls.”

It’s very wise to realize others are watching and learning from us. Even when we think they are not. Are we showing them

by our computing we love God and thankful for His great love He showed us by dying on the Cross?

[end]

Overview—Gramps is not just a storyteller, but reminds clubbers Jesus loves them.

11. Heart Talkin' Machine

“Heart Talkin' Machine” was written across the front of the cardboard box. Below these words were drawn mysterious things looking like dials, levers, and switches. The 'heart machine' sat on top of another box in the middle of the largest room in an old shed. The dozen or so young people sitting cross-legged were watching every move their silver-haired club leader made as he pretended to work knobs and switches 'drawn' on the machine.

Each movement was done very cautiously and not hurried in any way. The only background noise was the panting of Bowser, the computer club's mascot dog, on guard near the creaky door that announced late arrivals each Thursday's meeting.

Gramps looked occasionally over his shoulder making sure all the clubbers were watching. After a few moments the old gentleman turned around to face the youth, explaining his actions and the cardboard computer Heart Talkin' machine. His eyes met those of each and every young person in the room with the intensity of a heart surgeon.

His first words were, “Ain't nothin' I love more than tellin' stories to young people, making them happy and remind them about the incredible love Jesus has every day, for each and every one of us. And He loves us no matter if we've been good or bad. Isn't that great?” With a little smile, Gramps told the clubbers he liked computers but was never sure if something in one might jump out and grab him.

As he watched the young people, the old gentleman tapped on the side of the 'Heart-Talkin' Machine and said, "This machine does a very important job. And the tennis ball stuck on this stick is my pretend microphone. I tell my stories of love and laughter into the tennis ball – I mean microphone, and the machine makes all my words clear and plain."

Gramps pointed to a little twig sticking out of the front of the cardboard heart machine as though it was super powerful. but very delicate. "Now this switch here is probably the most important. When I turn it on, it gets rid of all the background noise; even Bowser's continual panting. See, when I share stories from my heart, it's really important there is no distraction or noise that might mix up the words. This switch is one I use most often."

After a few more explanations on how the Heart Talkin' Machine worked, Janie struggled to her feet. With a firm grasp on her cane, she made slow progress to the front where Gramps remained seated. Janie held out a small twig. The old club leader accepted the twig with a questioning look. The little girl with the sad eyes asked, "Gramps. Would you fix this twig in my buttonhole? That's gonna be my noise switch."

Janie continued, "See, whenever my leg gets to hurtin' real big, I ask Jesus to help me not to cry. But more than that, you told us how people hurt Jesus really bad. So bad our words can't explain it all. But I remember you said Jesus had to suffer awful, to pay for all the nasty things I've done; you called them sins. Gramps," pointing at the noise switch in her button hole, "I want Jesus to hear me real clear, and I wish I could tell Him a love story, 'cuz I know He hurts too..."

Friend, do you have a buttonhole near your heart that needs to be used? I'm sure your neighbor does.

[end]

[end of resource]

[My Notes]