



Tech Trash Evangelism

Stories 12 through 22

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greatest because it tells where computers came from and what their most important purpose is. Gramps knocked on the table to get everyone's attention. "But that's not even the best part!" he said as he raised his computer book.

"Can you see here? This is a website address where I am supposed to get all the corrections for my computer book." Then with great emphasis Marci and the children looked in the back of the Bible and didn't find any place to send for corrections for the Bible. Can you guess why?

With great care, Marci moved her fingers over the Bible and said, "Boys and girls, God has given us this most important of books to help us learn about His love for each of us. In a way it's just like my cookie jar to be opened and enjoyed. Some Bible verses we won't understand right away. But we can read some every day. You could say we should feed on what we read. The shepherd boy, David, who killed the giant, said, 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!'" Psalms 119:103. "David would read some of God's Word and then say, 'Mmmmm boy. I sure enjoy reading God's Word.' The Bible tells us Who loves us just the way we are, with nothing left out and without any mistakes.

[end]

[end of resource]

Overview—The Bible needs no corrections or additions. It seems to always be us, that need corrections.

22. Look What's Missing

“Clubhouse Special Presentation By Gramps and Marci, Saturday 9am” was what the sign on the door of the old building said. Even before 9am the crowd of kids was easily twice the size of its membership. Grady was the owner of the almost condemned building clubhouse. The kids affectionately called him “Gramps.”

Grady’s wife Marci came in and both silver haired folks sat at the table in front of the clubbers. Marci placed her picnic basket on the table as though it was plumb full of fresh eggs. As each clubber and visitor introduced himself or herself to Marci they saw eyes with age that almost said, “Can I be your grandma?” Many a grandma cookie jar has soothed a struggle of the day. But nothing can equal two eyes that have seen through many a storm and still twinkle the message, “May I share my time and love with you?”

Gramps then told his audience some of his fun and funny experiences he has had as a computer programmer. He held up a computer “How-To” book for his favorite computer program. He showed it had over 1293 pages. He continued with, “Clubbers, I want you to look in the back of my programming book here. The authors of the book couldn’t get all the explanations and pictures in the book so they had to include this CD.” He then nodded to his wife Marci.

With all the gentleness used for moving fresh eggs, Marci opened the basket and covers inside. She slowly lifted out the oldest looking Bible you’ve ever seen. The cover had come loose some years before and the ragged pages looked like they had been through the fiercest of wars. Using both hands Marci laid the Bible on the table and opened the back cover. Gramps and Marci made sure all the audience saw there was no CD disk in the back of that old Bible – because none was needed.

The clubbers said, “WOW!” and “Isn’t that great?” and other kudos. Marci told the clubhouse kids the Bible is really the greatest of computer books, if you can imagine that. It’s the

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by James 'Gramps' Curtis

ReachingYouth.net

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club members he'd have one here tomorrow. He said, "Just trust me."

The next day at club show and tell, Dean stood first and reminded the clubbers Gramps always says that most often you can have more fun making computer parts, rather than using the real thing. He opened a small paper bag and pulled out a computer mouse like none you've ever seen. It was handed to a very happy Nenee.

Dean had made a one-inch hole in the side of a crayon box. He made a ball from aluminum foil wrapped around a round stone, a little larger than the hole. A short piece of twine was stuck in one end of the pretend mouse. Dean used a black marker to draw in some buttons on the top of the mouse. With a little help from one of the other clubbers, little Nenee made a big red heart to use with the mouse she trusted Dean to provide.

Little Nenee stepped in front of the clubbers and held up the crayon box mouse. The whole club was thrilled to pieces, even if their little one didn't say a thing. She asked, "Who knows what this is?" She got a correct answer. Next she held the mouse as high as she could reach, to show the mouse underside. "OK, what is this thing?" Then she moved the ball with her finger. Another correct answer was given.

With the mouse in one hand and the big red heart in the other, she asked, "Do you know why we have a heart in us and not a rubber ball? Well, it's because God has a heart and we are made a lot like Him. The reason is He wants our heart to talk to His heart. He wants us to tell Him how much we love Him. "And real often too," ended with a little girl's giggle.

"Our grandpa club leader told me once, I can find out what's in God's heart when someone helps me read the Bible. Jesus uses Bible words to tell us to trust Him every single day. I'm just so happy Jesus put a heart inside me instead of an old rubber ball? I bet you are too." The applause from the clubbers was so loud; it scared her for a second. But the hugs that followed washed away any thoughts of missed hugs at home.

Do you know of a Nenee nearby who is waiting for you to make a crayon box mouse for them? [end]

show you something Brad. Look at the bottom of this keyboard. Do you see it has different feet than the ones on your big empty box? The keyboard feet fold out to lift the keyboard so that your wrists don't get tired when you type." Gramps continued, "Now look at the feet on the bottom of your computer box. They're completely different, but perfect for the job they are to do. I can think of three. One is to keep the box from scratching the table it's sitting on. Another is to keep the box from moving, but the last is the most important of all. These seemingly unimportant plain looking feet keep the box up off the table so cooling air can get to the delicate parts inside. How about you? I'll bet sometimes you want to go all to pieces when you lose your cool," Gramps said with a grin. He continued with a question, "Brad, the next time we get together, can you show me where the Bible says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.?"

Computer junk and the Bible teach us lots about feet and God's special for each of us. I can hardly wait to show you more of His goodies.
[end]

Overview: Is there something you need but don't have? Maybe God has given you the resources to make it.

21. Where's The Mouse?

WHERE'S A MOUSE WHEN YOU REALLY NEED ONE? Nenee was barely 6 years old, but she wanted to do the show and tell everyone at the computer club tomorrow. Her tears almost flowed when a computer mouse, even a junk one, couldn't be located.

If there was ever an important use for a mouse, it was tomorrow. All the other clubbers had a special love for this little girl, given hardly more home-love than a piece of furniture. Gramps, the club leader, was gone all week and the clubbers didn't have quite enough cash to buy a new mouse. But Dean told the

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]

over to the trash barrel in the corner. He thought it was sort-of strange. It was like a voice that only he could hear, was calling him.

He picked up the empty computer case, called a CPU that is actually the brains of the computer. He placed it on the workbench. All the important parts had been removed from it, so it seemed to just be in everybody's way; waiting to be tossed out. Brad moved his hands over the computer case very slow and tenderly. It was like the box was trying to talk to him through his fingertips.

Brad stared at the empty case and remembered that many times he felt just like that case; empty and worthless inside. And yet he had some kind of a story inside himself, just itching to be told. Brad slowly turned the CPU case over and over, examining it from every angle. His eyes stopped on the rubber feet on the bottom of the case. He looked at the four feet and thought they must feel like orphans; like castaways.

Club time had ended and Brad slowly walked home to baby-sit little Dede. Most of the walk home he stared at the sidewalk and his shoes with one shoelace missing. He had tried to use string for a shoelace once, but it didn't last. Mom had promised to get him some new laces, but she hardly ever had any more money than for groceries and paying the rent.

The next day as Brad walked home from church with his mom, he thought about a verse that Pastor Barns read from the Bible; "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Brad thought if he had a lamp on his foot, he'd want it to cover the missing shoelace. But he just couldn't get his mind off those computer feet that no one thought were important.

Wednesday's walk home from school took him past the SpaceGate clubhouse. He saw Mr. Davis mowing around the building. Brad asked permission to go in the clubhouse and Mr. Davis followed. He began asking Brad about some of the things he'd been learning. Then Brad started telling him all about the computer feet and the feeling there was a story inside him that needed to be told.

"Gramps" Davis, as he was sometimes called, said, "I'm dumber than a fence post when it comes to computers, but let me

With all the children watching, he reached over and picked up his old worn Bible and opened it to the book of John. No one moved or made a sound as chapter 17:11 was being found. Very slowly Gramps read aloud, “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”

Almost in tears, He raised his eyes to the children and said, “We see here the Creator of all things, praying to His Heavenly Father, and we get to listen in. What does He ask for? He asks that we be a team; a family of believers; all busy telling others about the TRIUNE GOD who has provided salvation for our souls and cleansing us from all our sins. All we have to do is ask”

When club-time was over, several clubbers asked if they could tell this story to the kids at their church. Hank popped up with, “I’m no good at tellin’ stories, but I’d love to help someone build a candy box church... or maybe even more than one of them.

□

[end]

Overview – Everyone has a testimony, that is sometimes more profound than other more visible ones.

20. Voice From The Empty Box

The empty box has a story to tell.

This Saturday was Ship-shape day for the SpaceGate Computer Club. On Ship-shape day all the clubbers spend club time cleaning the clubhouse. Even though the clubhouse was really just an old condemned building with no electricity, the gang was really grateful old Mr. Davis let them use it.

As the club’s leader, Ben, had assigned each of the clubbers a particular task to be accountable for. Brad was in charge of keeping the workbench clean, with the few tools in their place. Today, he had finished his chores before most of the rest and went

Overview—An older building can be useful for helping teach little waifs.

12. Little Hopeless

Gramps sat alone in the older building staring at the walls and corners, with a troubled heart. He had so many times, thought of tearing down the old structure. His heart told him this building was no more needed than he and his gray hair were.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the door open just a bit with a slow mysterious creak. In a moment a clump of long dirty hair began to appear. Next two dark brown eyes from a little preschooler cautiously peered around the door, spied Gramps and disappeared. A few minutes later the little girl peered in again. Without a word, she shyly entered the old building with her back against the wall, opposite Gramps.

Her dirty face, ripped clothes, and matted hair easily stereotyped her as a castaway in anyone’s book. The old gentleman and the little ragamuffin carefully watched the other wondering who would move first. Not really knowing why, Gramps slid out of the old rickety chair and sat on the floor cross-legged, as best as his stiff joints would allow. He slowly picked up a short piece of string lying nearby and started winding it around his fingers like weaving a rug. The little lady watched with increasing interest.

Gramps began to tie a knot in one end of the string and she moved next to him to get a closer look. Gramps said, “They call me Gramps. What’s your name?” “Hopeless,” was the matter of fact answer. “No. No. I mean what is your name?” he asked. “Mama says I’m hopeless. The lady that sleeps behind the bus station says I’m hopeless. Well, I guess I’m Hopeless. Mr. Gramps, is Hopeless my name or a disease I got?”

Out came a big bandanna from the well-worn bib overalls just in time to catch the first tears on the old gentleman’s face. In careful movements the little girl laid her head against Gramp’s

shoulder and let out a long deep sigh. His pained fingers took the bandanna and wiped some of the dirt off the face of little Hopeless.

The old building was so quiet he could hear the restful breathing of a little one searching for someone to care. The stare from the older gentleman returned to the walls and corners of the building whose future seemed hopeless. Maybe the name of the building should be Hopeless too.

The old gentleman's knee was killing him. Hopeless woke up but was in no hurry to leave the calm caring corner of the almost condemned building. Occasionally the neighborhood computer club brought junk pieces of computers to the old building that had no electricity. They tried to discover things about a computer's insides. Gramps had found an old keyboard. The keycaps were removed, sitting in a pile nearby.

He worked quickly hoping little Hopeless didn't wander off. Seating himself on the floor near Hopeless, he spread out the letter keycaps and started lining up the alphabet. The orange colored sun forcing its rays through the dirty cracked windows was moving low in the sky. With upturned eyes that would melt the heart of any football player, she asked, "Mr. Gramps. If I promise to bring them back tomorrow, can I borrow your computer keys?" The reply, "Sure. No problem." His heart said, "I'll give you my heart too, if you ask." They hugged and each went their own way.

The next afternoon, Gramps was sitting on the rickety chair and little Hopeless came in and gave him a hug that grandpas love, the world over. She didn't have the computer keys with her, so Gramps reminded her of yesterday's promise to return them. She pointed toward the door she had come in. "The bus station lady is here." A middle-aged lady with about the same appearance of little Hopeless, cautiously came through the door. In her hand was a discarded bread wrapper with the keycaps inside. She walked up to Gramps and asked, "Will you teach me too, mister?"

You can learn all sorts of things with computers, or even parts of them. Try it.

[end]

"A parable is a simple story that teaches a lesson; Jesus used many of them." Gramps set a computer keyboard on his construction desk and placed the candy box church on top.

"For this parable, we'll pretend this is your church. I'll lift it off and place it aside. In our parable, let's pretend each one of the computer keys is a different person in your church. Have you got it? Each key is a different person in church." He then directed the clubber's attention to the key between the Escape key and the Tab key. "You can call this key the TWIDDLE key. The little squiggly line on the key is called a Twiddle. It goes by other names too."

Imitating a lady's sad voice, Gramps tells the clubbers, "Mrs. Twiddle says, 'I just feel so left out. No one knows my name or cares what I do. I could just dry up and blow away and not another soul would even notice. On the other hand, my neighbor, Mr. Tab, gets used a lot and people really think he's important. Oh, I just feel so sad I could cry.'"

Then Gramps changed his voice to a man's voice, pointing to the keyboard spacebar. "Mr. Spacebar said to Mrs. Twiddle, "You think you've got it bad, I'm ten times larger than all the rest of you key people. I guess because of that, I'm always at the bottom. I never get used to type numbers or words either. But what makes it even worse is that I don't have anything written on me like you fancy keys do."

The white-haired grandfather looked seriously into the eyes of the dozen or so clubbers. "That certainly is no way to act in church is it? But many people do; even young people like you?" Now let's pretend these key people are part of a computer keyboard God uses. He certainly couldn't write letters of love to us, when some of the church key people are grumbling."

Gramps taped a large piece of paper to the wall of the clubhouse. At the same time he said, "While we are talking about names, like Mrs. Twiddle and Mr. Spacebar, let's list some of the names God has. These names tell us wonderful things about Him." Gramps listed, door, light, shepherd, bread, etc. The clubbers added other names to the wall list.

God the Holy Spirit goes with us wherever we go to remind us of God's love and how we should obey Him."

Chip reached out and touched the color cartridge and said, "It makes me feel warm inside to know God loves me so much." The young clubber looked up at Gramps, gave a smile and said; "I guess my primary job is to love God back, by telling my friends about God's triple-power love. Each of the two gave a thumbs-up to each other.
[end]

Overview—Gramps shows clubbers how a keyboard can generate team spirit.

19. Mrs. Twiddle's Problem

Squee-e-e-e-e-e-k ... JUST LIKE IN A HORROR MOVIE, the door of the condemned clubhouse opened, as the first few clubbers arrived. They saw Gramps using a couple of old crates as a table, building a church using a candy box (turned inside out) and paper. Grady Davis was the silver haired leader of the Computer Club. He'd tell you right off he'd much prefer being called 'Gramps'.

Soon, everyone quietly gathered around the construction project, watching every move as a model church began taking shape. No one doubted a fascinating story and related lesson would be crafted before the day was over. As Gramps finished the final assembly, he asked the boys and girls to have a seat. Since there were no chairs, they sat on the wooden floor.

Gramps mixed something in an old coffee can, and said, "Instead of tape or glue, I want to show you how to make your own paste from flour and water. It works pretty well. I'm going to use this church, and a parable to teach you about sticking together as a team, not just sticking things together. Both are very important, especially around church."

Overview-- Gratefully use what God has already given you. Look carefully for His not-so-obvious gifts too.

13. Computer Explosion

A computer exploded all over the walls! At least that is what it looked like. The Computer Junk Jockeys Club met in a vacant store in a part of town people had no use for.

When Ben first thought about the idea, it didn't even make any sense to him either. The idea of teaching a computer class in a condemned building with no electricity was screwy... it was definitely not cool. 'Course they didn't need any locks on the doors because Tom was their self elected watchman. That was reasonable because he didn't have any home or bedroom to sleep in anyhow.

But the more Ben thought and prayed about it, the more exciting a challenge it sounded. Some determined people climb mountains. Ben's mountain was six boys who loved learning new things, weren't doing well in school, and no hope of learning about computers any other way.

So Ben knew-- with the Lord's help, no money, no electricity, but a deep desire to teach others fun stuff, he was going to build a mountain called Hope, fueled with old computers. No problem... or was it to be?

The absence of electricity was really no setback. There were still tons of things to investigate.

But, even though the club had its very own watchman they needed a computer. Mark turned up the next day with a computer he found in someone's trashcan. His younger sister, Dede tagged along behind, DRAGGING the keyboard, like a small child pulling a wagon. Some people have no respect for fine equipment (grin).

Lots of people would be discouraged at not having a monitor, not having electricity, nor being frequently visited by interested cockroaches. All Ben could see though, were some boys

excited at taking something apart and learning what made each part work.

Dean was a natural note taker. No paper needed... just pick a wall. Dean didn't exactly understand the tickled feeling he got writing on the walls but thought the rest of the boys ought to envy him and his job as "scribe". Ben taught the boys how to carefully take the computer apart, piece by piece and try to understand the why and how of it.

When the power supply came out, the boys had Dean write two columns on the wall. One column listed the things they understood about the power supply. The other column listed questions needed to answer about the power supply. Then they drove a nail above the two columns and hung the power supply on the nail.

Next was the floppy disk drive. It was dismantled with all the attention and care needed. Dean was again put to work with the two-column process.

Ben's new school didn't have test papers, and pencils. Old rag blindfolds worked just as well. Tests were given one blindfolded student at a time. He was handed a computer part from the wall and then required to recite everything in its two columns. Pete flunked his test the other day and had to sit two hours with a live cockroach in his shirt. I think that was the last time anyone missed his test.

Mark's little sister felt important having provided the keyboard as Ben took some serious time in teaching the boys how important this junk computer has been to the club. He made it very clear that God puts great value on boys and girls who did not have everything others did. God wanted them to use all they had, to discover His great love for them by what He did on the cross.

Things We DO Know
Things We Gotta Find Out

When you think of the story what comes to mind first?

Let's see what we learn from each of the people.

Overview—Inside a Printer is a complex puzzle, but it is simple to understand God's love.

18. Crying at a Computer Printer

"HI GRAMPS! WHAT CHA DOIN' INSIDE THAT PRINTER?" Chip asked, closing the rickety clubhouse door behind him. Marty, who loved to be called 'Gramps' by every one of the SpaceGate Computer Club preteens, sat up and faced the single clubber.

One rough wrinkled hand pulled a large handkerchief out and wiped away a tear. Chip asked the white-haired man, who had a bone-deep love for all the children, "Ya OK Gramps? Did you jag yourself in that computer printer?" "No. Not at all, Chip. These are happy tears." With his favorite grandfatherly gesture, he gathered the young clubber in his strong arms.

Gramps knew hugs were the best medicine for little boys from broken homes that only saw hurt, hatred, and harsh words. "Chip, I love telling others how much God loves little boys and girls - and their parents too. God does it in a way like no other." Gramps gave the clubber a reminder hug and continued to explain.

"I've been trying hard to find a way to use these old junk parts to teach all you clubbers about our wonderful Triune God." Chip didn't understand what a triune anything was. They both peered inside the printer as Gramps pointed at the color cartridge. "Chip, God just blessed my heart this morning as I noticed this color cartridge that is actually three colors."

Gramps told the boy about the three primary colors, red, blue, and yellow, working together to create all the beautiful colors in the rainbow. He admitted he didn't understand how the colors worked together, but they did. "Only with the help of those colors can we enjoy all creation around us. Chip, our God presents Himself to us in three persons, to trust and enjoy, who work together to show us how much you and I are loved."

"God the Father is the Authority giving permission for things to be done. God the Son, Jesus, is the obedient Son who became human in the manger to show us more about that love.

SpaceAGE Computer Club members and guests would love to be in that pasture instead of inside their home conditions right now.

He then held up the cardboard with pictures of David the shepherd boy killing the bear, the lion, and the giant Goliath. Ben slowly opened his Bible and read the words David wrote in Psalm 23, "...he maketh me lie down in green pastures and leadeth me beside still waters." "David is telling us that there is a way to have calm and peace inside ourselves even when we see great anger and hatred all around us. How is this possible?"

With great excitement in his voice, Ben asked, "Wouldn't each of you like greater peace in your hearts every day? Let me read to you how you can have that 'green pastures' and 'still waters' attitude in your heart. I'll back up to the beginning of the verse." "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures and he leadeth me beside still waters."

After the presentation was over some of the clubbers and guests left. But two of those listening went up to Ben and asked if they could read the verses in the Bible for themselves. They began asking more questions on how to make Jesus the shepherd of their lives. And even more exciting, one of the two wanted to take the words home and share them with his mom.

Penny and her trusty tape recorder saved all the words in Ben's presentation. She planned on making a little take home paper including some of the pictures. This would make it easier to share the good news with others.

Who can you share the peaceful encouraging words with?

[end]

(Have someone make a list of the clubbers comments on a blackboard. Maybe have more than one person making the list.)

Dede (Mark's little sister)

She was little but there was a job just right for her

She felt important.

Computer clubs are for boys and girls.

Mark

He was resourceful. He listened to what the club needed and pitched in his efforts.

He didn't turn down the computer parts because they were not a complete computer.

Dean (the scribe)

He helped the leader

Leaders need faithful helpers. Parents are leaders that need faithful helpers (their children).

Tom (the watchman)

Instead of complaining that he had no home and family, he still pitched in by helping protect the club and it's belongings.

Ben (the leader)

He didn't think of himself as being important as the leader of the club.

His greatest desire was to teach others things he knew about.

Especially the value God puts on each and every one of us.

We need to pray and ask for God's help.

[end]

Overview—The body is similar to a computer when it has to use all parts to give information.

14. The Mummy’s Message

The Mummy Speaks! That’s what the sign over the clubhouse door should have read. It seemed to Ben almost everything about his neighborhood club changed when Mr. Frank began meeting with the boys every other Saturday. All fourteen of them were discovering interesting things about themselves, about computers, and especially, about God.

Tommy, the shortest of the clubbers, was lying crammed into a box. He’d been wrapped in plastic, and wore goggles to protect his eyes. His whole body was covered with enough sand to keep him from moving. This mummy-in-sand donned an old gas mask that kept sand out of his mouth, and allowed him to talk with the rest of the group.

All month, the discussion topic had been the phenomenal communication abilities God has given to us. Tommy, the “mummy-in-sand,” surveyed the faces of the clubbers staring down at him, hoping he was still on good terms with everybody while in his helpless position. Mr. Frank’s only instructions to Tommy were to talk in a monotone voice, and to always speak at the same rate of speed. For the next half hour, the boys conversed with the “mummy” about all sorts of general school and sports topics.

Then the mummy was uncovered, and a lively discussion followed. The task was to figure out why, when Tommy didn’t have any noticeable difficulty understanding the clubbers, they had to ask him extra questions just to get the same amount of information.

The boys were spellbound as Mr. Frank explained our whole body “talks,” even though we think only mouths and ears are involved. Some people refer to this as “body English”. The sand covering the “mummy”... er, Tommy, had kept his body from “talking.” This forced the boys to ask extra questions in order to understand him.

Overview—Beginning a club for young persons takes space, equipment and teamwork.

17. Still Waters

“Shhhhh. Don’t make a sound.” The spy mission had begun. And half dozen or so young people were creeping forward on the ground. Ben, the leader of the SpaceAGE Computer Club and Penny, their photographer, were in the lead. They were quietly moving through the trees at Tall Pines Lake.

Penny needed to get some photos of the peaceful scene, especially of ducks before being scared off. These photos would become part of a computer presentation the gang had named “Still Waters.”

The project might seem a little strange to outsiders because the club had only one computer beyond repair. And no electricity in the almost-condemned building they held their club meetings in. But Ben had begun training the clubbers well, learning that even broken things have great value. Ben saw that value in the broken computer, this building, and each club member from their less than perfect families.

Another important lesson learned by the clubbers right off, was everyone big or small, young or old, could help. Ben assigned everyone a task. Penny would take pictures. Dean was to cut several pieces of cardboard about the size of the front of the broken computer monitor. Little Dede colored a green pasture with flowers and a few sheep. Mack and a couple others would cut out pictures of Jesus as a shepherd. Marnie really worked hard at finding a picture of David killing Goliath. Donna would make the paste from flour and water to glue the pictures on the pieces of cardboard.

Saturday was show time. All the clubbers and a few guests were anxious to see how Ben would fit it all together. He really captured everyone’s attention describing the green pasture picture. This scene spoke of plenty of food for the sheep, good smelling flowers, a bright warm sun, and lots of fresh air. Most of

girl handed the little one a small computer part. Samantha got down on her knees and whispered into the little girl's ear.

Then with Gramps permission the duo showed the clubbers how much fun it is to tell about big and small parts, just like big and small people are very important in getting things done. After finishing, the others applauded. And they congratulated the 'little teacher' with kind words and hugs. No one ever knew how much those hugs meant to Nenee.

Gramps looked at the dozen or so clubbers seated in front of him. He began again, "The Bible has exciting things to teach us about how to act around others and especially God. Listen to what God says to the Pharisee people who acted like Sam. In Luke 11:43 we read, "Woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets." It's pretty clear what God thinks of show-offs who try to get others to look up to them and almost worship them." Gramps looked towards the back row, "Monte – I have a question for you. Why do you wear those glasses?"

"Well, my glasses make things clear; the things I look at, or read." Monte had a serious look on his face as he continued. "Without these glasses I would never be able to read God's precious words."

Darla asked, "Gramps, would you show us how to be spectacles that make God's love clear?" Another clubber shot up with, "And we don't want to be like those smart-alec Pharisees." Gramps nodded 'Yes' with a big smile and two solid thumbs up. "I'd love to. Let's start with a Bible verse or two, which describes someone like Samantha and Nenee. We'll read in II Tim 2:2

Can you find someone like little Nenee to practice with? God has a place for you to make a clear presentation of His love.

[end]

The youth leader took special care to clearly explain how much God loved each of the boys individually; more in fact, than man's words can tell. So He showed man what real love is, by sending His Son to pay the price for all our sins on the Cross.

Fred was beginning to get the connection between the mummy experiment and email.

"Communication using only written words, whether in letters or electronic mail, eliminates the 'body English' of our communication with others," he said. "And sometimes it sends the wrong signals or the wrong feelings. I have to include a word like <grin> or <frown> in my email message to show what my body English is saying."

Then Monroe jumped in with, "When I'm talking on the phone, it's a little easier because I can tell if the other person is angry, excited, out of breath, or even of a different nationality."

How wonderful it is that God has sent us His written word, the Bible, so that we can learn more about how much He loves us. But in the holy Scriptures, His actions spoke louder than words, when He came to this earth to show us His love. His body English erased all doubt or confusion that He is who He says He is. He is our only way to salvation, and He wants our communication – all of it, to praise Him. □

[end]

Overview—The best of gifts is more than a pretty bow; it is the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

15. Person Present

It was the saddest face on a little girl you've ever seen. Maybe she had good reason... There really wasn't anything pretty about her, except her name. "Momma calls me Lotus. She wants me to be her little flower." She continued with, "The problem is – there ain't nothin' pretty about me."

Being little she couldn't do much to help the other preteens in cleaning up the old condemned clubhouse. Silver haired

“gramps” the club leader, noticed Lotus often got a dustpan for someone or placed a dirty rag in the trash. Several times the young lady, just out of the blue, would give a clubber a hug or even an “I love you.”

Gramps snapped his fingers with a big smile, like he just discovered a colossal idea. He went out to his old car and brought in one of those colorful bows like you sometimes see stuck on the top of gift boxes. He fixed a clean white bow on the top of Lotus’ head. With a big smile he said, “There. Now, you look just like a little flower, like your momma wants you to be.”

The little flower continued her small helpful acts of encouragement for the clubbers.

About an hour later Jamal the African-American boy walked up to Gramps. He said, “I think Lotus looks just like a present with her little bow.” He went on, “I’ve seen presents of shirts, shoes, skates, and other stuff. But this is the first time I’ve ever seen a person who looked like a present.”

Before Gramps could get a word in, Jamal added, “I’m tellin’ ya for sure, Little Flower is showing me that person presents are the best kind.” A few minutes later, Gramps asked all the clubbers to gather around the old barrel and they sat cross-legged on the floor. The old gentleman stood behind the barrel with Jamal and Lotus standing on either side of him.

Gramps asked Jamal to tell the listeners what he had just said about Lotus. And about her little gifts of kindness which now made her into a ‘person present’ for the club. Jamal and Lotus then joined the other clubbers. With his best grandfatherly voice, Gramps said, “Clubbers, do you know that God is the best at giving gifts – especially person presents. That’s right. He loves each one of you so much He searched all of heaven’s treasures for His best gift. God decided the best gift would be a ‘person present’. And it was to be His only son, Jesus Christ.”

The club leader tried to swallow the lump in his throat as he went on. “God knew this person present – His only son Jesus – would require Jesus be nailed to a cruel cross. Jesus – our person present would pay for our sins so we can spend eternity praising Him.”

The question is – do you like to receive presents? Accept this person present and you’ll get a mansion and a whole new body too!

How could anyone not wish to be with His son one day?
[end]

Overview—Not boasting like Spectacle Sam is a lesson to be learned by all clubbers.

16. Spectacle Sam

“**ZOWEEEE! OH BOY! THIS IS GONNA BE A BLAST!**” the clubbers exclaimed. Gramps had just given them fantastic news: “Next month the Computer Club is going to do a presentation at the nearby Paxton Community Church.” He waited until the preteen clubbers’ enthusiasm calmed a bit. “OK gang, in the meantime, we’re gonna learn about Spectacle Sam.”

In nothing flat, all club members sat on the worn out floor of the old clubhouse building. It got quiet as a graveyard for another one of Gramp’s stories you could make a movie from. He began with, “As we start preparing for the Paxton Presentation next month, we should learn a few things about spectacle Sam.”

“Sam always put on a pair of oversized eyeglasses with some weird colored clothes (eyeglasses are sometimes called ‘Spectacles’). He would climb up on a box so everyone had to look up. He made you think he was some sort of clown or entertainer.”

“Sam would take three small parts from a trashed computer and juggle them. After a minute he would stop and give some kind of information about that part. The problem was, he used complicated words that confused most everyone listening. Boys and Girls, do you get the idea Sam was trying to make a spectacle of himself with what he knew? Like showing off.”

As Gramps was speaking, Samantha had taken little Nenee by the hand and they moved to the front of the group, The older