

MisSion CriTikal

#13 – Papa Jesus

'Rocket Powered'. That's it – Rocket Powered. Watching those children, especially the smaller ones with all their energy is like a rocket with feet. Lyla decided her next Sunday afternoon Story Time would include something the children would all enjoy and teach them safety and respect for God's House. No matter that this God's House was a tent with tablecloth patches.

The children were all taken to the edge of the clearing above the ram-shackled village and gathered vines and tender branches. They were then twisted around the ropes holding up the mission tent and held in place with more of the wire strands from Willy's cable. It really grabbed your heart to see the children working on the church – THEIR church – and they'd see that you respected it.

What a lesson in church-lovin'. Pitch in, help to make it better, work with others. Whether it's a tattered tent or a brick and marble mansion – change it from 'the church' to MY CHURCH. Even children know how.

“Daenum. I need some help with one of the children. We both need to talk to Toby, the 5 yr old. He's the orphan,” asked teenager Lyla. Dae replied, “OK. Is he causing problems? I know what. Why don't you bring Toby over to the tent, and just inside. Let him know right off, no one's in any trouble. We'll just have a pow-wow like Indians do, to talk things out,” Dae added with a grin.

Toby's brown cheeks and smooth skin would make him a prize for most any children's photos. His eyes were black as a coal mine. The circles of his eyes were red from the many recent tears.

“I ain't done nothin' wrong, I know of, Mr. Dae. Honest. All I done was ask Miss Lyla if Jesus would be my papa. I didn't mean no harm.” Lyla put her arm around Toby, wishing she could reach inside Toby and hug his aching heart. (Some things only God can do.)

“Why do you want Jesus for a papa,” asked Dae. “Well, 'cuz I ain't got one, like other kids do – no mama neither! I'm just a thrown-away little kid! An' that's not all. My arm here, gets ta hurtin' some days, but I can still do some things. More 'n nat, if

Jesus would be my papa for real, for good, I'd mind him always. See, Miss Lyla said Jesus is a lovin' papa and a wonderful Savior. Well, I ain't learned what a savior is, or if I need one. My empty pockets says I couldn't buy me a savior, even if I needed one. But all I need right now is a papa that loves me, even with my bad arm and empty pockets, well... except...”

Toby pulled a small smooth stone that sparkled some, if you held it up to the sunlight. “I know what, I'll give Jesus only thing I got, if he'll be my forever papa. Here's my sparkle stone,” he handed the small stone to Dae as though it was a down payment for a forever papa.

The teenager Daenum didn't really know what a for-real preacher would do or say to a child with Toby's request, but said, “Toby, you are a wonderful little boy I know Jesus wants to be a papa to. I'll hold on to your sparkle stone for right now. We'll talk more about this later, OK? And I for sure won't forget.”

Dae gave Toby a warm hug as the little boy went outside to play with the others.

Dae noticed the look on Lyla's face and asked, “Lyla, you look as though you still have something on your mind. Let's go sit under that shady tree where it's cooler and talk some about what's on your heart.”

Lyla began with, “Dae. Toby and his wanting a forever papa opened a part of my heart, I'd kept closed from God, even though I've loved teaching the children and a couple teens, in the Story Spot, each Sunday afternoon. Unlike little Toby, I understand what a Savior and Lord is. I know I must invite Jesus into my heart trusting His shed blood to pay for all my sins as my Savior. But I also know I must truly make Him the Lord of my life. I think that means I must keep Him in a place of being my loving daily boss – sort-of.”

“Well, Dae, would you help me to pray and ask Jesus to be my forever Savior and forever Lord? I never learned the right words to say.”

Actually, there's a Lyla near you. Be ready with loving guidance including snippets of scripture.