

# CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

## Consider using this message ...

in worship as a children's sermon  
as a part of your congregation' celebration when Bibles are distributed  
as an introductory activity to cross-generational *Book of Faith* activities  
as a large group 'opening' element  
as an additional "story telling" activity in the midst of the rally day materials  
in chapel for your congregation's school or early childhood center  
or for a family take-home activity

## Advance preparation for leaders:

Read over the script and gather necessary materials. The message is not meant to be preached as is, but used as a guide for you to adapt to the children in your congregation.

## Materials needed:

The book *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown (a children's classic, available from a public library or a member of the congregation)



Two Bibles, one in pristine condition; the other underlined, well-marked and well worn, with bookmarks, etc.

## Children's Message Script:

Some of you, when you were younger, probably liked to hear stories over and over again. Did your Mom or Dad ever read the same book each night? Do any of you remember some of your favorite books?

I know someone who read *Goodnight Moon* to her children every night. She read it so many times that she didn't even need to turn the pages or look at the words. She had memorized the book, and would sit in the dark, while her children were in bed, and recite the words.

Have you read *Goodnight Moon*? I have a copy of it here, and thought we could read some of it together. (Read a few sentences or as much as time allows. Be sure to adjust to the reactions from the children)

Let's talk about what happens in the story. The little bunny says "good night" to all the things in his room, doesn't he? These are all the things familiar and comforting to him—his bowl of mush, his red balloon, his picture of the cow jumping over the moon—and the quiet old lady who was whispering hush. These are many of the things that make him feel safe and loved, aren't they?

Do you have special things in your room that make you feel safe and loved? What are they?

I think the words of *Goodnight Moon* made a lot of other children feel safe and comfortable when the book was read to them. Do you have a special book that made you feel that way?

I have a couple of books here that I'd like to show you. (Pull out two Bibles—one well used, with markings, under linings, cover falling off, etc.; the other in pristine condition.) Actually these are two copies of the same book. What book is this? Which of these Bibles do you think was cared for very well? Which do you think was the most treasured?

Let's think about that while we listen to a Bible verse-- Colossians 3:16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord."

What does it mean to have word of Christ dwell in us? To dwell in us means that it needs to live in us, and become a part of us. Just like all the things in the great green room were familiar to the little bunny, we need God's word to become familiar and comfortable to us, so that we know the stories of God's people—how Moses led the people out of the wilderness, or King David fought Goliath, or Joseph's brothers sold him, or Jesus being born, or Jesus visiting Mary and Martha.

When we look at the two Bibles, which do you think helped the Word of Christ dwell in me?

That's right—the Bible that I read, and reread, and marked my favorite passages in, so that I could remember them, and even memorize them.

[If you present Bibles to certain grade levels at Rally Day, the presentation could be made at this point. Pencils could be handed out and children could be encouraged to mark Col. 3:16. It's important to get the first marks put in a Bible, so that it becomes a workbook, something to study and pour over, not just a book to sit on a shelf.]

I could read a passage that some of you have probably heard before. [Read a portion of Luke 2, or another familiar verse.] It may be a long time before any of you read all the way through the Bible, but we can become familiar with it slowly, by reading a bit at a time. Your Mom or Dad could read a verse or two each night before bed, or a story from a Bible story book, so that you could learn about the people of God.

We want the word of Christ to be as comforting and familiar to us as the great green room was to the Little Bunny. Then the word will be dwelling in us richly, and we will be able to sing praises and teach others from it.