

FOLLOW UP KEY TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AS EVANGELISM

Juanita and Horacio Martinez have been members of Cristo Rey (Christ the King) Lutheran Church for two years now. Cristo Rey is located in a humble barrio of Guatemala City, Guatemala. Before they belonged to Cristo Rey they were nominal members of the Roman Catholic Church, however they rarely attended mass. As Juanita said, “We really had no relationship with Jesus Christ. We really didn’t know him as our Savior.”

Juanita and Horacio’s journey to faith began when their two children, Maggie and Francisco, begged them for permission to go to the Sunday School at Cristo Rey. They knew other children from the neighborhood who went to Sunday School there and wanted to take part in the singing, crafts and Bible lessons. Juanita and Horacio were reluctant at first, but finally they came to the conclusion that it couldn’t hurt their children.

Soon Maggie and Francisco were coming home Sunday mornings with their lessons, crafts and Bible stories, singing the songs they had learned. The children told their parents of the adult Sunday School that met with the pastor, and of the small group of people who gathered for worship afterwards. Juanita and Horacio were impressed, but never thought of getting involved themselves. After all, Sunday was the only day of the week they had off work. “We didn’t see how or why we needed it,” said Horacio. “We were quite content to let the children go. After all, it gave us a little time to ourselves on Sunday mornings. But what our children were learning just wasn’t sinking in to us.”

Soon, however, Pastor Rodriguez and the vicar (pastoral intern) of the congregation came to visit. “It took them a couple of visits before we took it seriously,” Horacio commented. “We had never had the meaning of the Christian faith explained to us like that before.” “We thought—at least I thought—that Christianity was about trying to do your best. We didn’t know it was about our Lord Jesus having done everything for us,” added Juanita. The pastor patiently helped them understand their sinful condition, but also the forgiveness and new life that was theirs in Christ Jesus. “He definitely confronted us with our rebellion, but in a loving manner. Even when he was very clear about it, it was always in a loving way. He never looked down on us or gave us the impression that he thought he was better than us,” Horacio noted.

Soon the entire family was going to Sunday School and church together on Sunday mornings, and enjoying the freedom and joy of their new life in Christ. They explained it this way: “We were impressed that the pastor—and the vicar—cared enough about us to visit us several times. That is what really got our attention. They patiently helped us understand—and they demonstrated—the love of Jesus.”

The Sunday School can be an excellent tool for the evangelistic work of the congregation, but it requires follow-up. Experience has shown that often parents are willing to allow their children to attend, but that doesn’t mean they see it as something important for themselves. They like their children to learn something positive. They believe that somehow the Sunday School lessons are good for their children, but often they don’t make the connection to their own lives.

The key to reaching the unchurched parents of Sunday School children is follow up by the pastor, the Sunday School teacher, or someone from the congregation. Even in our busy, impersonal world, taking the time to personally visit the families of the children

will demonstrate in a real way the love of Christ, and help parents to see that the things their children are learning are good—more than good—for them also.

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