



# KidMin Moments that Make Us Who We Are

**In the weekly bustle of children’s ministry, you don’t always get to see the lasting life transformation that comes from God’s Word instilled in young hearts and minds.**

**So we asked a mother and her daughter, Rachel Key and Lisa Pham, to describe those unmistakable moments that made a spiritual imprint. Who taught them. What they learned. How it formed them. Where they’ve taken it.**

**In these short stories, we see glimpses of KidMin moments that make us who we are. And we hear reasons to stay passionate about the faith we’re passing on to today’s generations.**

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## Rachel

### DISCOVERING THAT PAULINE LETTERS ARE NOT ROMANTIC POETRY

I was 19 years old and attending Cal State Northridge, studying sociology. I was looking for an easy class. When I saw Pauline Letters, I thought: *Oh, that sounds like a girl reading romantic poetry. I’ll sign up for that.* When I got to class, they were talking about the Bible. I quickly realized, *Oh no, I’m in the wrong class.*

I liked the professor but explained to him that I would not be coming back. He asked, “Why is that?”

“The Bible has no relevance to my life, so this class is not going to help me in my future. I’ve never even seen a Bible, let alone cared about reading one.”

His eyes lit up like any good teacher’s would. “Really? Well, I think this could be a very good class for you.”

He pulled out a three-by-five card and wrote on it: *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.* “Start reading John,” he said.

Around the same time, I began dating a really cute guy. He invited me to church, and I liked the service. I had never heard the gospel before. I started attending on a regular basis.

## STACKING KIDS DEEP AND WIDE IN A '66 CHEVY

I was lost and learning about Jesus. I'm the oldest of nine kids, and I wanted my family—my sisters and brothers and their friends to know about Jesus too. So I invited them to church. I lived on the worst street in the entire San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles. Every kid I invited said yes.

I had a '66 Chevy with big, deep, wide seats. We didn't worry about seat belts back in the day. I loaded so many kids into my car every Sunday that they were sitting on each other's laps.

## LEARNING THE BIBLE BY TEACHING IT

A few Sundays after I started bringing kids to church, the Sunday school teacher said to me, "Rachel, if you can bring them, you can teach them. You'll start next week."

When she gave me the teacher's book, she put it right on top of my Bible. The edges of my Bible pages were completely gold—that's how new it was. I didn't know the front from the back.

It's pretty unusual to have someone teaching Sunday school who is so new to the Bible. But every week, I learned one lesson ahead of my class. At first it was David C Cook curriculum. Three years later, new pastors came to our church and introduced me to Gospel Light curriculum. That's how I learned the Bible.

## SAYING YES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INVITATION

One Sunday night, a country western band came to play at the church. I don't like country western music, but I went and sat with the young people in the back row. I had been going to church for about six months—faithfully, every week, learning about God and asking lots of questions. I had been teaching Sunday school for three months.

At the end of the service a gal gave an altar call. She approached each person in the sanctuary, one by one. There were only about twenty people in the whole church.

Everybody else knew that I was the only one there who was not a believer. The Holy Spirit said in my heart: *She's going to ask everybody but I'm sending her for you. What's your answer?* I had already answered the Lord in my heart, *Yes, I believe in you.* When she came to me, I went forward with her, and she prayed with me.





# Lisa

## HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

My mom has taught Sunday school for as long as I can remember. One Sunday when I was about four years old, she taught about Samuel hearing God's voice. She told our class, "You can hear God's voice too, but not out loud. It's a quiet voice."

I remember thinking, *Wow, I want to have that relationship, where I can hear God talk to me.*

I can picture myself in my car seat, and praying, *God, I want to hear you.* Then I was really quiet. The only thing I heard was my three-year-old brother rustling around. I told him, "Be quiet, I'm trying to listen to God over here." He kind of froze. Then the only thing I could hear was myself breathing. So I held my breath for a little bit.

Eventually, quietly in my heart, I heard the same phrase over and over again. It was almost like God was smiling and laughing a little and saying: *Lisa, you are my special little girl.* I started breathing again, and my brother started moving around again. And I could still hear it: *Lisa, you are my special little girl.*

## BEING KIND TO A BULLY

In second grade, there was a bully in my class at school. He wasn't bothering me, but I told my mom all the bad words he said to another kid. My mom responded, "Oh, really? I know where he lives. Let's get in the car right now."

He lived about a half mile from us. Mom said, "I'm going to wait in the car while you go to the door and invite him to church this Sunday."

"Do I have to?" I didn't want to.

But I went up to the door and knocked. Before I even finished asking him to church, he answered, "I would love to go with you."

So we picked him up on our way to church, and he gave his heart to the Lord that Sunday.

Be quiet, I'm trying to  
listen to God over here.

## TEACHING MOM A THING OR TWO

In Sunday school, I started to assist my mom in classes when I was about ten years old. I would attend my class, then we would stay for the second service hour, and I would help out in her kindergarten class.

As we were driving home one Sunday, I said to her: "Mom, you did a good job. But what if you had told the lesson this way?" I explained how she could have done it a little bit differently.

And she said, "You know what, Lisa? I think you should teach the lesson next week."

I studied the lesson several times during the week. The next Sunday, I got to sit in the teacher's chair. I was pretty nervous with all these 5-year-olds staring at me. Of course, my mom was there. After I taught the lesson, I thought, *This is something I'm supposed to keep doing.*



## SHOWING LAUNDRY LOVE

When I was growing up, my mom would look for opportunities for us to serve people. Now I do the same with my kids.

Our church encourages what we call ‘laundry love.’ We take quarters to the Laundromat and pay for everyone’s laundry. The kids love putting quarters in the machines. People are always shocked. Some of them will come visit our church.

Last week a man said, “Is it true you’re paying for our laundry? Tonight, I was going to choose between doing laundry or going grocery shopping. Now I can go buy groceries for my family.”

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## Rachel

### HAVING WHAT IT TAKES TO TEACH KIDS

I’ve been teaching Sunday school for forty-some years now. What prepared me was a compassionate heart toward kids.

I’ve always told ministry leaders, you may not have skilled teachers at your disposal, but look around the church. Who gets down on their knees to talk to kids? Who gives high fives when kids walk by? That’s a person with a compassionate heart. You can equip them to teach, but only the Holy Spirit can give them that kind of heart. So they’re the ones you look for.

### TEST DRIVING DIGITAL CURRICULUM

This year, I started using Gospel Light’s digital curriculum from Disciplr. At first I really didn’t like it at all. I missed the comfort of the book.

Disciplr didn’t have some of the things I was used to. But the layout is simpler, and everything you need is there in a click, instead of having so many separate resources. It’s less for me to manage in class, so I have more freedom to build relationships with the kids and make sure they’re tracking with me. It took a month for me to get to where I really appreciate the simplicity of it.

I also like that I can email the lesson and assign a specific part to each teaching assistant. It’s more efficient and affordable than getting books for everyone.

### GETTING KIDS EXCITED TO OPEN GOD’S WORD

I tell teachers, if you have kids who are bringing their phones, they’re bringing their Bibles. Help them download the app. Do it in class time.

Some churches make kids put their phones into a basket when they come into class. That sends a message: *I don’t trust you.* You need to trust the kids and teach them to use the tools that are going to be at their disposal for their whole life.

It’s a little disconcerting for teachers who aren’t used to it. But give it a try, and you’ll see kids excited to open God’s Word.

If you have kids who are bringing their phones, they're bringing their Bibles.

Lisa

## PURSuing BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT

In my first role as a children's pastor, I wrote children's curriculum to go along with a special series that our whole church was doing together. During that time, I felt a tug in my heart to pursue writing curriculum for Gospel Light, so I applied for the job. The pastors at my church gave their blessing but there was a mix-up during my reference checks. One pastor thought he was marking positives and accidentally marked negatives instead. I didn't get hired.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, I knew I was supposed to be there. So I contacted Gospel Light again and asked, "What other positions do you have?"

I took a sales job because I wanted in the door. Eventually, two more job openings came up—one in district sales and another in editorial. Around that time, my mom wanted to make a career change that fit her calling. I said, "Hey mom, how about I take editorial and you take sales?" And we did.

Recently, I helped to adapt Gospel Light curriculum for digital delivery through Disciplr.

## HELPING A FRIGHTENED BOY FIND COURAGE

Now I'm the children's pastor of a new church plant in Los Angeles, near downtown. The community includes two extremes—a lot of hipsters and also a lot of gang activity.

Last year I had a boy in my class who was 10 years old. He usually had a huge smile on his face—a happy kid, super-excited to be at church. But on one particular Sunday, he was really quiet and shaken up a bit.

His grandpa came by at the end of class and explained that there had been a drive-by shooting outside the barbershop, just after the boy had gotten a haircut. A bullet barely missed him.

The lesson that Sunday was about Joshua, with the verse about being strong and courageous. It made a real connection with the boy. Scary stuff happens, but God is with us always.

## SEEING A KID GET THE MESSAGE

I love the moment when you can see that the kids have really caught it. They start putting what you've been teaching them about God into their own words. I live for that.

Not long ago, I was teaching a lesson, and we had done an opening activity. Then we had snack and played a game before the Bible story. Everything followed with a central theme we were teaching that day.

Suddenly, one kid put both hands up in the air, smacked his head in a funny way, and called out: "I get it. Everything goes together!" ●



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Check out 10 questions to define success in your kids' ministry.