

## Sending the Right Message

October 2019

Sometimes stuff in the Bible just seems weird. I was reading in Mark 7 today and when healing a deaf and mute man, in verses 33-35 it says, "...Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears. Then He spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). At this the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly."

Really Jesus?!? Were the fingers in the ears and the spit and the touching of the man's tongue necessary? I wonder what the deaf/mute man thought was happening to him? Couldn't Jesus just have said the word, and brought back the man's hearing and voice? We've seen Jesus do it before!

But then I thought, maybe there was a method behind what Jesus was doing here. If Jesus simply said, 'Be opened.' The man wouldn't have heard it because he was deaf. Through touch Jesus communicated with the man what He was doing in a personal way the man could understand.

Jesus knew exactly what was needed to speak without words and engage with him about what he was about to do in his life.



This will be Sophia's first year to be able to get on the bus and pick her own toy. She's really excited!



These two wanted to show me their toys they still have from the last two Christmases'. They sure do take good care of them!

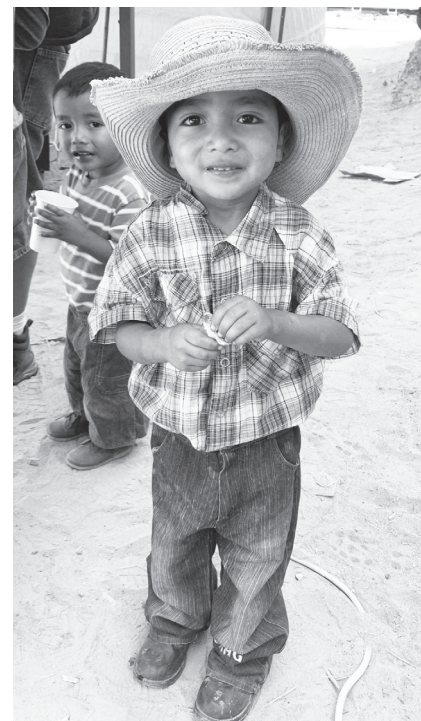
Now follow me here, because what I'm about to say might sound weird! In reading this it reminded me of Christmas. I mean, what speaks to a child? Many things can. But so often a toy meets them at their point of understanding and can communicate a wonderful message of love and care. It means something to them. And when given with a smile can touch places in their heart that aren't easily reached. When one of the children connects with just the right gift it's really special. Each year we see how excited the kids are when we pull up with a bus full of toys. They walk the aisle, scanning the shelves. In there they will find



We plan to have a stuffed animal waiting for those who are too little to pick their own toy.

a toy that's special to them. They come off the bus with a smile, holding their toy and showing it to their moms and to their friends. Christmas is a special time for us here in our neighborhoods and in our ministry and kids look forward to it throughout the year. It really is a chance for us to speak love into the lives of the families we work with!

It also might seem weird that I'm writing about Christmas in October. The thing is, we're working to get the best prices and selection possible for the 1,200 kids we'll serve. To do so, we've made a great connection with a toy warehouse in LA. But their stock can run out quick. Ordering just the right toys and transporting them across the border means that we need to start the process now to be ready. We've been able to find quality toys at a low cost. We will also take any toys you wish to purchase yourself and donate. In the end, it will take about \$6,000 to purchase enough toys for all of the kids.



This young boy is from one the poorest neighborhoods we work in. The kids here are always so grateful for their new toy!

It is exciting to think how these gifts will bring joy to the lives of our kids! It's why we make this effort every year, and I want to thank you for helping us to pull it off. For many of our kids, it's the only new toy they will receive this Christmas. The rarity of it makes it even more special and our hope is that it will communicate God's love in ways each child understands! I'm thankful for our Savior Jesus who speaks to each of us in deeply personal ways and I'm trusting God that this Christmas children will get the message of His great love loud and clear!

From all of us at Spectrum,

  
Matt Kooi  
Spectrum Ministries Director



Naughty or nice? We don't keep track. Everyone gets a chance to get a toy!

**PS** - Thanks for everyone who took a few minutes to fill out our survey card from last month and send it in. We really want to communicate well with you, and the cards were a chance to see how we're doing! Thank you!

*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..." - James 1:17*