

TABEEBA

THE LIFE STORY OF PATRICIA ST JOHN

PLEASE NOTE!

The visuals for this series can be purchased from many CEF offices and online shops. For a list of CEF offices and online shops in Europe, please visit www.teachkids.eu and click on "Locations".

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Introduction

This is a true story of Patricia St John, an English nurse living and working in a North African country during the 1950s.

The Tabeeba (Tabeeba means “nurse”)

The main aim of these lessons is to show the children how God calls, guides and leads all those who put their trust in Him. They will learn that God has a special purpose for each of their lives and that He is ready to show them what that is. God may be preparing them for some very important service for Him in the future.

At the same time, Christian children will be encouraged to see the urgent need of other children, in their own land and also overseas, to hear about the Lord Jesus. They will see how God will help them to witness to Moslem children, as well as others, in school and at play. They should show special love and concern for any Moslem children they may meet. They should pray for all children who do not know the Lord Jesus, be kind to them and seek to witness to them. If they start where they are now, this may lead to a call to work for the Lord, even in Moslem lands, when they grow up.

No matter what the religion is of those who do not yet know Christ, the aim of the Christian is always to point to the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus should be shown as a living Person Who is the only One able to save and the only One Who can satisfy every heart. Emphasising deficiencies in other religions will only antagonise and perhaps cut off any further opportunity to present the claims of Christ.

When asked how she evangelised Moslem children, Miss St John said that she used the Wordless Book. Teachers may wish to have one at hand to use with unsaved children individually, or to teach in another part of the class. Saved children could be encouraged to have their own copy to share with their friends.

The life and writings of Miss Patricia St John (pronounced “Sinjen”) can be used to help the children grow in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Her books for children should be available to borrow, and also videos where possible. Each one has a spiritual message which is put over in a very understandable and attractive way to children. They have been used by God amongst adults as well as children throughout the world. The children could be encouraged to write creatively to extend God’s kingdom.

Lesson 1 and part of lesson 5 are taken, by kind permission, from some of Patricia St John’s unpublished writings. Much other information was given by her sister, Hazel.

Books for children

- ◆ Tanglewood’s Secret*
- ◆ The Secret Boat
- ◆ Treasures of the Snow*
- ◆ Twice Freed
- ◆ The Four Candles
- ◆ Secret of Pheasant Cottage
- ◆ Star of Light*
- ◆ The Victor
- ◆ Rainbow Garden*
- ◆ Where the River Begins*

Books for 6-8 year olds

- ◆ Friska My Friend
- ◆ The Other Kitten

* Available as flashcard lessons, published by Bible Visuals Inc. and obtainable from your local CEF® representative or Christian bookstores.

While this series of lessons was being prepared, Patricia St John went to be with the Lord. She died on August 16, 1993 - "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). She was a very special person and gave much help in the writing of this text.

Christine M. Chester

Review questions

For each lesson some review questions are given. These can be used after the lesson or the following week, before teaching the new lesson.

Review time, if conducted in an orderly way, can be an ideal opportunity to reinforce what you have taught, while still being fun for the children. You can use this time ...

- 1 to find out how much the children are understanding and remembering.
- 2 to help you as a teacher to know what you need to emphasise more so that the children will remember better.
- 3 to provide a time of fun in the class. The children like competition and look forward to this part of the programme. But it is more than just a game: it is a time of learning.

In this textbook only questions on the lesson are included. It would be profitable to include questions also on the songs, verse and whatever else you teach. In this way the children realise that every part of the programme is important.

Lesson 1

Far from home

Aim: To show the desperate spiritual need of children who have not heard about the Lord Jesus.

Lesson

Flashcard 1-1 - The market place

There in North Africa, the street market was noisy, restless and full of beggar boys looking for scraps of food. Soon word spread among them.

“An English lady has come to live in the city and she gave Sillam food to eat when he told her that he was an orphan.”

If they all went and told her they were orphans, no doubt she would hand out food to them as well. It sounded too good to be true!

A little group of ragged boys knocked loudly on Patricia St John’s door. Some of them were really homeless, having been turned out to beg and to leave more food for younger children.

The English nurse opened at once and looked at them rather doubtfully. They certainly all looked terribly dirty, mouths dropping and bright eyes fixed on her anxiously. Their hands were held out in a begging fashion for food. Her Arabic was still not very good but she wished to start medical work and this might be an opening.

“Come in,” she said. “Are you hungry?”

They told her earnestly that their parents were dead and that they had had nothing to eat all day. It all sounded very sad (although it was not true) and the English nurse, or “Tabeeba”, as she became known by them, led them upstairs and they settled down on her floor, hands folded, faces appealing and angelic.

The boys thought nothing of telling lies. If they were not caught out, then it didn’t matter, they told themselves. We all do find it easy to tell lies, if it will get us out of trouble or help us to get what we want. The Bible tells us that this does not please God and that He always knows, even if we think no-one else knows.

Flashcard 1-2 - The Tabeeba’s home

Bread, and a basin of food prepared earlier in the day, were produced. The boys scooped the basin clean in less than a minute and their bright eyes searched the room, noticing the things in her house. The Tabeeba suspected nothing, for they looked far too saintly to steal.

In faltering Arabic she told them a story and showed pictures. It was about a lost sheep who got stuck in a thorn bush and was nearly eaten by a wolf. Its shepherd came to look for it and rescued it, laying it on His shoulders and carrying it home rejoicing. And then the English lady explained that the Shepherd was a picture of Someone called Jesus, Who could rescue people from Satan and lead them in the Way to Heaven.

The boys laughed delightedly. They loved the pictures and the warm glow of the charcoal pot in the middle of the circle. One boy, Hamid, thought that this Jesus must be the same as their prophet Mohammed for he had been taught that Mohammed was the one who taught men the way to God. He did not know that Mohammed was only a man, who died hundreds of years ago. The Lord Jesus Christ had also lived long ago, but He had died on a cross for our wrong doing. Then He had risen from the dead, because He is God, and He is alive now and forever! He is the **only One** Who can save us from our sins. Boys like Hamid needed to hear about Jesus the only Saviour.

The other boys were looking around the room again and when told to go home, Sillam moved towards a pile of teaspoons. He saw his chance, as the nurse led the others downstairs, and hid one among the folds of his clothes. They pressed round her and promised that from now on she was their mother and they would all come again the next day. They kissed her hand, bowed and called down blessings on her head and on the house of all her ancestors. She was delighted and never noticed that Ayashi had taken advantage of the noise and dimness of the passage to dart behind her and help himself to a small piece of soap in the sink under the stairs.

The door closed behind them and they went prancing along, talking all at once. Sillam and Ayashi were heroes, immensely pleased with themselves. This English lady had given them food. Next day they would pretend to know nothing about the soap and the spoon.

The boys felt very proud and clever to have tricked the Tabeeba. She had given them food, a warm fire and a lovely story but their selfish hearts only thought of themselves and what **they** wanted. Do you ever feel like that? Only the Lord Jesus can help you to put others first, to let them have the first choice of biscuits, or the best part in the school play.

Flashcard 1-3 - Hamid thinks again

But Hamid was not perfectly happy and when the other “orphans” rushed off to join their parents in the dens they called home, or to sleep in some sheltered doorway, he suddenly kicked his brother Ayashi, hating him for stealing the soap. On the steps of the mosque they made up their quarrel, because the night was cold and the only way to keep warm without blankets was to cuddle up together. Hamid

lay awake thinking about the story the English lady had told. The prophet Mohammed was high and mighty and asked a great deal of his worshippers in the way of fasts, giving money in alms, prayers and pilgrimages to holy places. Those who obeyed his rules had reason to be proud. But there was small hope for little boys who had nothing to give and no learning. There was a love about that Shepherd and a helplessness about the sheep that did not seem to fit in with the teaching of the Koran, their holy book. He would go again next night, not to steal, but to listen.

Flashcard 1-2 (again) - The Tabeeba's home

The street boys went back next evening and were so offended when the Tabeeba brought up the little matter of the soap (she did not mention spoons) that she almost wished she had kept silent. After they had eaten, she once more sat down beside them and talked about sin, about not living to please the Almighty God. She told them about the purity and brightness of Heaven, the home where God lives and a place where there can be no sin.

“God hates stealing and lying and unkindness, and this would keep people out of Heaven,” she continued.

They nodded their heads and told her she was quite right. “Other boys tell lies every day and some boys steal, but we are good, grateful little orphans and not like that.”

These new lies came so easily to their lips, it had almost become a habit. Again their bright eyes looked around the room, but they took nothing that night. She would be on the lookout.

Flashcard 1-4 - Caught

A man was waiting for them in the street outside. He was a teacher in the mosque, the building where most of the people of that land went to pray to Allah. They did not know about the only true God Whom we read about in the Bible, the God Who made the heavens and the Earth. This teacher would help children to learn the Koran, their holy book, the book that told them about Allah. How sad to think that this teacher, and all who listened to him, had not heard the truth about the true God and His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“What do you go in there for?” he asked sharply.

Hesitantly, Sillam said, “She gives us food and lets us warm ourselves at her fire.”

“And she shows us pictures and tells us stories,” added the littlest boy.

“What stories? Tell me about these stories,” the teacher asked sternly.

“About a sheep and a Shepherd, and she tells us about Heaven,” he answered eagerly.

“Ah!” cried the temple teacher angrily. “It is the English religion she is teaching you. She knows nothing about the way to Heaven. Those who listen to her are on the road to destruction, and I forbid you ever to go inside her house again. Anyone who disobeys will be beaten.”

And he strode away.

The boys fell on the littlest one and gave him a good thrashing for his foolishness. They had no wish to give up this newly found pleasure and warmth. Sillam had seen a box of pencils on her table and had decided to take one.

“We’ll wait a night or two and then go back,” they decided. “We’ll wait until the street is dark and the shop opposite is shut.”

Three days passed and spring rains came down in torrents. There was food and warmth if they would take the risk, and they were used to taking risks. Their plan of campaign was as follows. When the shop was shut, one would knock and another would stand on guard. The rest would remain hidden round corners and in doorways. As soon as the door was opened they would make a dash for it.

Ayashi (small, quick-witted and fleet of foot) was put on guard while Sillam ran forward and knocked softly. He darted back into the shadows. The English lady knew nothing of what had happened, so she opened the door and was surprised to find the street apparently empty. She looked left and right and then suddenly ...

She was nearly knocked over by the rush of little feet out of the dark as seven small, wet bundles of rags hurtled past her into the passage. She was swept inside and the door slammed and bolted and seven impudent, grinning faces were lifted triumphantly to hers. They seemed to have taken possession of the house. They led the way upstairs, leaving trails of muddy footprints behind them, gathered around the charcoals and demanded their supper!

Flashcard 1-5 - The story of the cross

As they had not come for several nights, the Tabeeba was not expecting them, but she managed to produce seven slices of bread and treacle. They had never tasted treacle before and were delighted. Having licked their fingers clean, they settled themselves for the story. Now that her teaching was considered dangerous and wicked, that definitely made it more exciting.

It was a strange story that she told them that night and they all listened wide-eyed. When she had finished they seemed quiet and thoughtful. This man called Jesus, Who was the Son of God, had been nailed by His hands and feet to a cross of wood. He had died to pay for the wrong things other people had done. He had died for the sins that those boys had done, and for yours too. Have you ever asked the

Lord Jesus to forgive you for your sins, to live in you and to change you? He will do it today, if you really are sorry for your sins and you ask Him to forgive you and make you a new person. If you would like to know more about this, come and speak to me after class.

Hardened and used to suffering as they were, these boys felt it was a cruel way to treat a good man. Hamid, not really understanding yet, felt sorry. Then the bright, warm hour was over and they must go back to the muddy streets.

The boys clattered down the stairs and Ayashi opened the door very cautiously. The street looked silent and deserted. They all tumbled through the door after him.

At that instant two tall figures with sticks pounced, but by ducking, biting and scratching they all got away, leaving just handfuls of rags.

The boys decided later that it was best not to have more dealings with the English lady. They would become pious Moslems for a few days and turn up in the mosque for the lessons from the Koran and shout abuses at the foreign teacher. Only Hamid was sad. Beneath his dirt and tough manners, there beat a tender, grateful heart. He alone wanted to go back, not for what he could get, but because he wanted to see the lady. Although everyone said her words were bad, to him they had sounded good and comfortable. He had known enough of greed and hardness lately to be weary of it, and she had spoken of kindness, truth and compassion. He said nothing to the others, but a few nights later he wriggled free from the sleeping Ayashi on the mosque steps. He kept to the shadows and all bad men were fast asleep so he met no-one. He gave a quick, light knock on the nurse's door.

A window opened and a voice called, "Who's there?"

Hamid darted into the middle of the street, standing under a street lamp to be seen. She recognised him and after a few minutes she came down in her dressing gown and opened the door. Again he scuttled in like a frightened rabbit and shut the bolt behind him. Then he seized her hand, wrung it and beamed at her. No need to pretend tonight - to be an orphan or a young saint. He could just be himself, a happy little boy who had found a friend.

The nurse produced some bread and treacle and while he ate he explained what had happened and how they'd all been forbidden to come.

"But I shall come," he ended calmly. "I shall come every night when they've gone to sleep. Now tell me a story."

He kept his word and came every night. No-one knew, except his little brother Ayashi who feared his older brother too much to tell tales.

Later the Tabeeba paid her rent for four months and went to help in another district. When she returned in the autumn and moved into a house in a back street hidden away from the market, he called again. He was a little taller and browner and his head had been shaved and was covered with spots. Otherwise he was just the same and his long shirt looked as though it had not been washed since she had seen him last.

Flashcard 1-6 - Hamid's invitation

The Tabeeba had brought medicines with her this time, which she gave quite freely to those in need, and she became quite popular. So Hamid became bold and visited her daily, round about sunset.

One day he arrived bursting with importance, and gave a little bow and said, "My mother invites you to visit her in our home."

"I thought you were an orphan!" replied the nurse, astonished.

He waved her remark aside and merely said, "When will you come?"

"Tomorrow at 2.00 p.m. You can come and fetch me."

After being away many months, Hamid and Ayashi's parents had returned to the town and were living in a little upstairs room.

Hamid sped off there, crying, "She's coming, tomorrow at 2.00 p.m. - to visit us and to tell you the stories."

His mother laughed. "Of course she won't come and whatever would we do with her if she did? Where would she sit? What would we give her to eat?"

Flashcard 1-7 - The attic room

"You can make tea. She can sit on father's coat. You must buy tea and sugar and be ready for her," insisted Hamid.

Next day, as his mother was stirring bean stew in a round clay bowl, balanced on the charcoal fire, her thoughts were interrupted by a rush of feet in the courtyard below.

Hamid's face appeared in the room, red with excitement, shouting, "She's come!"

There was noise on the ladder and the next minute the face of the visitor appeared at the doorway. Astonishment kept them all silent for a moment, then they all burst into shouts of laughter. What would Hamid do next!

Hamid pulled out the cloak from under his astonished father and spread it for his friend to sit on. He ordered his mother to make tea. Being eleven years old and a Moslem, he had a "right" to order his women folk about. But there wasn't any sugar, for mother certainly never expected the lady to come. It was all most awkward. They whispered, giggled and nudged each other. The only thing seemed to

be to ask her to eat beans and rye bread with them. English people certainly would not be used to such food, but there was nothing else to offer.

To their relief she appeared to like beans, and she drew up to the circle and dipped her hand in. If she ate their beans, then she was one of them. When the meal ended, the great moment had come for Hamid.

“Now, listen,” he cried, “and she will tell you the stories from her Book.”

News had got around and neighbours were swarming up the ladder, squatting around, some friendly, some hostile.

She spoke in a strange, foreign way which made them all laugh, and Hamid realised that they understood nothing. Well, they were **going** to understand! He had come to love these stories so much. If only they could be told properly, his family would love them too. Hamid leapt to his feet, drew himself to his full height and raised his hand for silence.

Flashcard 1-8 - Hamid, the preacher

“I will tell you,” he cried, “about a Shepherd who had a hundred sheep and lost one.”

He stooped and counted imaginary sheep.

“So He took His lantern and went into the mountain and looked and looked.”

The boy was roaming the room, shading his eyes, holding an imaginary lantern high in the air.

“Listen. He hears it crying.” Hamid crouched in the corner and bleated like a lamb. “The wolf is just going to eat it, but the Shepherd is not afraid. He goes and rescues it and lays it on His shoulders rejoicing.”

Family and neighbours watched silent and fascinated as Hamid toiled the length of the attic, his shoulders bowed beneath his burden, his hands raised to hold his sheep.

“Come, my friends. Come, my neighbours,” he cried. “I have found my sheep which was lost. Let us have a great feast and all rejoice together.”

His face was radiant and his fear forgotten. He had preached his first sermon to his people! **He** may not have known very much about the Lord Jesus, but he **did** want his family to know what he knew about this kindly Prophet, Who had given His life to pay for the sins of others. Do we share with our family and friends what we are learning about God? We don’t need to understand **everything** before we can start sharing the “good news” with others. They really do need to know about Him.

The family and friends rocked with laughter and applauded loudly, but then Hamid turned to the visitor.

“Now,” he commanded, “tell them what it means.”

She tried, falteringly enough, but their interest had waned with the end of the story. Nobody was listening any more. Instead they wanted to know why she was so tall and how much her stockings cost!

Conclusion

More about these boys can be read in the book “Star of Light”, which tells the story of another north African boy. Although the plot is made up, much of that story is true too and the Tabeeba visited that boy each year until she passed away.

All this took place in the 1950s, but it is still just as important today to take the good news of the Gospel to boys and girls who have never heard. We need to pray for boys and girls who are being taught a religion that is not the truth. There are many Moslem children, even in our own land, for whom the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is searching. Pray that many will come to know Him and trust Him as their Saviour and friend. Perhaps there are children you know who don't know the good news, and maybe God is asking you to tell them.

What was this English nurse doing so far from home, in a dark and dirty attic, struggling with a strange language? How had she been led to a place where people knew nothing about the true and loving God? Let's go back to the beginning. Come next time to find out.

Review questions

- 1 True or false? All the children were orphans who went to Patricia's house to beg for food. (False. Some were orphans, but the others were not.)
- 2 What name did the children give to Patricia? (Tabeeba.)
- 3 Who **always** knows when we have told a lie? (God.)
- 4 What is it that only Jesus can do for us? (Save us from our sins.)
- 5 What two things did the boys steal from the Tabeeba's house at the end of their first visit? (A teaspoon and soap.)
- 6 What did the boys' teacher say he would do if they went back to this English lady's house? (He would beat them.)
- 7 What religion were the children in the story? (Moslem.)
- 8 What is the name of the book that teaches about their god, Allah? (The Koran.)
- 9 Who was the only boy who kept going back to visit Patricia? (Hamid.)

- 10 What story did Hamid tell when Patricia came to visit his family?
(The lost sheep.)

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Lesson 2

Called by name

Aim: To show the need to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour when we hear God speaking to us.

Lesson

Do you remember Hamid and the naughty boys who came to the Tabeeba's house every day for food and a story from the Bible? Do you remember what "Tabeeba" means?

The Tabeeba, whose name is Patricia, was struggling to learn the very difficult Arabic language and longing to be good enough at it to share the good news of the Lord Jesus with the people of that North African country.

How did she come to be so far from home?

Let's go back to just after the First World War.

Flashcard 2-1 - The early arrival

"What a lovely pram!" exclaimed father. "Let me take the babies for a walk while you have a rest."

The pram was big and roomy enough for both Farnham and little Hazel to be tucked in. Away father went with great glee for his first walk, pushing his children in a pram.

Mr and Mrs St John had returned to England only a few days before, from Brazil in South America, where they had been missionaries for a number of years. There such things as prams were unknown on the rough tracks of inland Brazil. If they were not old enough to walk, children would have to be carried on mules. So father was not used to taking the children out in a pram.

Mother watched as father set off on the steep path of the seaside town where they were staying. Father was busy thinking of other things, and at the top of a steep hill he lost control of the pram. By then, oh my! ... It hurtled away by itself down the steep slope. Mother cried out in horror and father raced to catch it. However, he was too late. The pram crashed and the two babies were thrown out onto the grass verge!

Happily, the children were not hurt at all, but as she watched, poor mother had a terrible shock. Such a shock that the baby she was expecting decided to arrive that very night, there in the guest house, some two weeks before it was really due. So, on 5 April 1919, when the First World War had just come to an end, Patricia St John started

the life that God had planned and that was to take her to many exciting parts of the world.

Flashcard 2-2 - A growing family

Soon the St John family were settled in their first English home - in a street of granite houses on a slope of the Malvern Hills. The family grew up in the same house as grandmother and great-grandmother - four generations lived in the very same house. This would seldom happen nowadays in England as people move house so much and older people are often left to live alone.

The St John family grew - bigger in size and two more in number as well. The youngest, John, was born when Patricia was just five. They were not told that a baby was coming. People didn't talk to children about these things in those days.

She was sent to stay with her other grandmother and was told, "There will be a new toy when you get home."

"What kind of toy?" she wanted to know.

"Well, it's alive," was the reply.

She thought hard and decided it must be a puppy. That would be a really nice toy to have and she eagerly waited for the time to go home again.

The train drew into the station and with her grandmother she walked out of the station yard, up the hill and into the road where she lived. She went faster and faster as she thought of the new puppy.

"Where's the puppy?" she called out as she rushed into the house.

But, joy, oh joy! It wasn't a puppy, but a real, live little brother. She was so thrilled that she sat on the stairs and cried and cried - with happiness!

As he grew older, John became a very special friend and playmate. Even when he was very small, she would play school with him. Was she getting ready for the time when she would leave school? God uses all the experiences we gain to prepare us for what He wants us to do with our lives. Have you ever thought what God might want you to do with your life?

Flashcard 2-3 - Fun on the Malvern Hills

The family home was at the north end of the Malvern Hills. There was a Clock Tower and a quarry for the granite that was used for many of the homes and walls of the town. Rising up over the houses were the green slopes of the hills where rabbits and sheep were often grazing on the short turf among the golden gorse. Visitors in those days could hire donkeys to take them up the winding paths to the top of the highest hill. From there you could get long views over the

countryside - even as far as the mountains of Wales on one side and glimpses of the River Severn on the other.

The St John children loved to catch and ride the donkeys when they were put out to graze. Patricia remembers that it often ended with a toss over the donkey's head into a prickly gorse bush!

When father was at home he would take them for enormous walks - down to the River Severn to swim. Even when they were very small they would walk perhaps eight miles each way. Was God using this to prepare the children for what He had planned for some of them in the years ahead? They would go for long treks on the Malvern Hills too, making bonfires and cooking sausages. The St John children found the first wild flowers and searched for birds' nests. They would pick little, pale wild daffodils in the meadows beyond the south end of the hills. These would be carefully packed and sent by post to a medical mission in the east end of London, for people who lived in the heart of the city and who seldom saw flowers growing.

As a child, she recorded her love for the countryside in many of her poems. Even as a small child, she began the writing that was going to become an important part of her work for God. "Spring on the Malverns" is one of her poems.

"When Spring has kissed the Malverns
The hillside wakes anew
And the new-born lambs frisk gaily
In the fields of early dew.
The daffodils at Dymock
Sigh faintly on the breeze
And violets nestle snugly
Beneath the woodland trees."

Flashcard 2-4 - Special treats and Christmas boxes

As a family they had very few treats because a missionary father did not have a very big income. But on their birthday each child could choose a pudding and they would have a present. For father and mother's wedding anniversary they went to a transport café run by a Christian. They sat on wooden benches around a table and were allowed a glass of lemonade and could choose a cake. It was so special that they thought about it for weeks!

The St John family attended a little church nearby, where nearly all the people seemed to be old. The St Johns were the only children who went there regularly and so they became very spoiled and loved. There was one lovely man who always gave them surprises and he gave them tuckboxes at Christmas - a box with about five chocolate bars inside, a whole box each! To them it was so exciting. They were always afraid that he would forget.

One December, early in the month, the children discussed it and decided to send John, about four years old at the time, to this gentleman. Eagerly they watched him through a crack in the door.

“Mr Price, er, we did enjoy those boxes you gave us last year,” John reminded him. He had been well rehearsed.

“Capital, capital,” was all the reply they could hear.

What did that mean? Had he understood the message? The St John children had to wait and see. However the tuckboxes duly arrived - one each, on time.

Flashcard 2-5 - Sundays were always special

One Sunday morning the St John family went off to church as usual, but little John was left behind. The Swiss au pair, who helped look after the grannies, was to bring him along to church later. John persuaded her, after the others had gone, that he **always** took an enormous model elephant with **squeaky** wheels to church. What joy for the other children, when the door opened on the hushed assembly and John advanced up the aisle, “Squeak, squeak!” All the children’s heads turned to watch.

Sundays were especially happy days. Mother used to read aloud to the children - remember there were no TVs or videos in those days. Radios were expensive and walkmans unknown. Other children might have boring Sundays, but mother put a lot into them for her family. She kept special toys for Sundays, including some lovely bricks. It was the only day that the children had sweets, and then only after dinner. Can you imagine that? So that was exciting too. They had tiny “letter” biscuits and could make a Bible verse with them. After tea, all the family gathered round the piano and sang their favourite hymns. It is so good to make Sunday quite different from the other days of the week - a day when we can remember God and all that He has done for us, and a day when we can do kind things for other people.

Flashcard 2-6 - Missionary friends

One thing Patricia always remembered was that on Sundays, the family made “missionary books”. These were like scrapbooks in which were pasted postcards and cuttings from magazines. Mother always had a good supply of missionary booklets, letters and pictures. Many missionaries from all over the world stayed with the family at different times and they wrote lovely letters. This made the scrapbooks really interesting and personal, as many of the missionaries were friends of the family.

The family enjoyed hearing about missionary work in many different countries of the world. Learning about and praying for God’s work in other lands is a great way to find out if God has plans for you to

travel for Him, too. This was another way in which God was preparing some of the St John children for their grown-up life.

Flashcard 2-7 - Called by name

One night, mother was reading to the children a little missionary book called "Pearl's Secret". In this book a little girl died in China, probably the daughter of a missionary family there, but she left a small notebook in which she had written that she had received the Lord Jesus into her life on a certain date. Under it was written "Isaiah 43:1 - 'Thus says the Lord, ... 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine.'"

Read the verse from your Bible, or have an older child or helper read it.

Mother talked to them very clearly about that verse. Patricia didn't know what "redeemed" meant, but she well remembers going up to her bedroom and kneeling down. She told the Lord that **her** name was "Patricia St John" and if He was really calling her then she wanted to come and be His.

Patricia was about four or five years old at this time. Being still very young, she does not remember all the difference this made to her then - except that the whole world looked so much more beautiful than before. The next day, she looked up into the hollyhocks, which were much higher than she was, and she thought, for the first time, how really beautiful they were.

Patricia always loved the beauties of nature, especially flowers. Later, while still a school girl, she wrote "Crocuses on the Lower Lawn".

"If God caused crocus petals
Thus to unfold in spring
In gold and white and purple
He can do anything.
And if God drew this wonder
From winter's frozen sod,
And wrought this resurrection,
Then I will trust in God."

Flashcard 2-8 - The Redeemer

Do you know that our Father God knows your name? Perhaps He is calling you by name right now. Is He telling you that although you have done many bad things, yet His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, **died to redeem you**? When the Lord Jesus died on the cross He took the punishment that you should have, so that now you don't have to be punished. If you really know and understand that, then perhaps God is calling you to Him too. What will you say to Him? Will you do what Patricia did, and kneel down quietly and privately and talk to God. Tell Him that you are sorry for all the sins you have done that made the Lord Jesus go to the cross to die in your place. Then you can tell God your name and ask Him to help you live a new and

changed life from now on. You may be really surprised to find out all the new things that God will do in your life.

Conclusion

Did it make any difference to Patricia, now that she knew that she belonged to God? What kind of a little girl did she become? Come next week to see what happened when she went to school.

Note to teacher

Life on and around the Malvern Hills is pictured in the first book for children that Patricia wrote, "Tanglewood's Secret".

For an excellent illustration of Isaiah 43:1 and the Redeemer, read (perhaps with the children) Patricia's short book, "Friska my Friend".

Review questions

- 1 What language did Patricia learn so that the people would understand the good news about Jesus? (Arabic.)
- 2 Let's go back to Patricia's childhood. In what country did she grow up? (England.)
- 3 What happened to the pram with Patricia's brother and sister in it? (It went out of control and the babies were thrown out onto the grass.)
- 4 Patricia thought the family was getting a new puppy. But what **was** her real live surprise? (A little brother, John.)
- 5 Which animals did the children like to ride out in the fields? (Donkeys.)
- 6 Where did the family always go on Sundays? (To church.)
- 7 What kind of scrapbooks did the family make on Sundays? (Missionary books.)
- 8 About what age was Patricia when she told the Lord Jesus she wanted to belong to Him? (Four or five.)
- 9 How do we know that God knows each of our names? (He tells us in the Bible.)
- 10 What can you do if you think that God is calling you to Him? (Tell Him you are sorry for your sins and that you want to live a new life. Children may give variations of this answer.)

Lesson 3

In God's school

Aim: To teach the importance of allowing God to guide all the steps of our lives.

Lesson

The Tabeeba, the nurse in north Africa, grew up as a child in a loving, Christian family. As a missionary, her father was often away from home in other lands. Patricia learned much about God's work around the world from him and during the happy Sundays spent making missionary scrapbooks. To begin with, she had a very ordinary life, and then ...

Flashcard 3-1 - The little Swiss school

Whoooooosh ... went the little sledge down the snowy hillside, as Patricia, all wrapped up against the cold, set off for the little village school. Hazel and Farnham, the eldest St John children, both able to ski, went on ahead. It was often quite dark when it was time to set out because the school day started at 7.00 a.m.! Patricia loved to look up at the moon in the early morning sky and see the beauty of the mountains and woods. No, she wasn't in Malvern now, but in Switzerland.

As often happened during her childhood, her father was away on a missionary journey to South America and so mother was left to care for the growing family of children.

One day a letter came from an old friend of Mother's who lived in Switzerland, with a very exciting suggestion, "Why don't you bring the children out here for a year? I have several chalets and could rent one out to you all."

So here was the family in Switzerland and although she was now seven years old, this would be her first opportunity to go to school. Before, in Malvern, a lady had come to the home to teach the St John children and a few other children from neighbouring homes. Patricia had been too small then, and so she had just sat under the table. However, in Switzerland the children learned not only to speak French but many other things too.

Flashcard 3-2 - Working holidays

It was a lovely school! The children never knew when the holidays were going to be!

Remember, this story took place about 80 years ago - school holidays in Switzerland are not like that today!

One day they would go to school as usual, or so they thought, and then the teacher would look out of the window and say, "Perfect weather for potatoes. All go home and dig potatoes for four weeks."

Away they all went, very eagerly. The other holiday, to cut the hay, was for six weeks. All the children at the school went home to help their families get in stores for the animals ready for the long, bitter winters. The St John family had no animals of their own, but they went to help their friends.

Another holiday was to collect fuel for the winter. This was a very important time as much wood was needed and it had to be stored, ready for use when the big snows came. The huge stove in the chalet had to be stuffed with more and more wood to keep everyone warm. The St John children worked for themselves this time. A great pile of wood was covered and sheltered near the chalet ready for use when the first deep snows fell. Holidays were all work - but great fun! They had a really lovely time.

"It was the most wonderful year of our life, I think," Patricia remarked long afterwards.

She remembered much of the thrill of the sledge in winter and the magic of the great tree in the church on Christmas Eve, festooned with oranges and gingerbread bears. There was also the excitement of finding the first, precious spring flowers as the snows melted.

The new languages she learned became useful to her in later life, as we shall see next time. God uses all the happenings in our lives to change us into the people He wants us to be and to help us to do the things He wants us to do. Have you ever thought and prayed about this?

Flashcard 3-3 - School adventures

Back home in England after this exciting year, the daily round of Clarendon School in Malvern might seem rather tame, but Patricia always managed to have some fun. She had a fearless love of adventure which stayed with her through her life.

One day, when she was about thirteen years old, she climbed out of a dormer window in the sharply sloping roof of the four-storey school building and sat, legs astride the roof ridge, on the highest point reading a book!

A trembling old lady, passing by, rushed into the building crying, "There's a girl on the roof!"

Astonished teachers trooped out to look up, wondering whatever they would do.

The headmistress called quietly, "Come down, Patricia."

She closed her book, slid down the tiles and climbed in at the window. When rebuked for this wild behaviour, she replied, “But no-one ever told me not to!”

Flashcard 3-4 - A missionary heart

Patricia and her brothers started the “Hotspot Club” which met in the attic. Each member was named after one of King Arthur’s “Knights of the Round Table” and each one was pledged to help needy people in different, but secret, ways. It was discovered later that Patricia and her brother went to a local lodging house for friendless and homeless old men. The children played the violin, sang favourite hymns and took little gifts. As well as playing the violin, Patricia had mastered the piano accordion.

With her life-long love of small children, she started a class which was known as the “Garage Sunday School” for the neighbouring children. Some of these children were still in prams. Then, as now, babies were a special delight. She always planned to have children of her own one day and had even chosen names, but sadly the man she hoped to marry was killed in the war. As time went by she realised that this was not to be God’s will for her.

Flashcard 3-5 - Among the hop pickers

In further preparation for a missionary life, she went with others to the camps of hop pickers in the late summer evenings, playing, singing and sharing the message of the Lord Jesus. At the end of a busy day harvesting, the workers would be glad to sit with their families and listen to the singing and stories.

From an early age she had a strange assortment of friends - the homeless, gypsy children, neighbourhood babies and elderly invalids. You never need think you are too young to serve the Lord Jesus. If you ask Him, He will show you ways you can work for Him. Perhaps there are elderly or sick people that you could help. Perhaps you could encourage your friends to come and hear the Gospel at Club.

Flashcard 3-6 - A mother’s gift

It wasn’t until many years later that Patricia heard about a very strange gift that her mother had given to God.

In those days, wealthy Christian ladies would have missionary meetings in their lovely drawing rooms. They would invite a missionary speaker to tell of their Christian work in foreign countries. Then the listeners would be asked to support the missionary by prayer and money gifts. The ladies would sit in these lovely homes and at the end of the meeting they would go up to the front and take off their pearls, rings or other jewellery as gifts that could be sold and used for missionary work.

Mrs St John never had much spare money, but she always had a real interest in what God was doing in different parts of the world. One day she was invited to a meeting where a man was talking about work in Japan, and at the end the wealthy ladies were beginning to go forward with their gifts. Patricia's mother sat there with absolutely nothing to give.

"If only I had something precious to give," she thought tearfully.

Suddenly it was as if a voice inside her said, "What is the most precious thing you've got?"

She answered, "My three children." (The others weren't born then.)

She got up and said quietly, "My three children - I offer my three children for God's service, if He should so lead them."

That was an amazing offer to make! When missionaries went abroad in those days, they didn't come back - it was for a lifetime. Those three children were all that she had - the others were born later.

(Those three children did become missionaries overseas - Hazel, the eldest, taught in a school in Beirut, Lebanon and eventually became the head of it; Farnham became a doctor and ran a hospital in North Africa; and Patricia - well, we already know where she ended up.)

Patricia didn't know about this prayer of her mother until much later, but she and her brother used to talk a great deal about serving God overseas. They decided to be missionaries and go together. Many missionaries came to their home, some came just for meals and others came to stay for longer. All these had exciting stories to tell of what it could mean to follow God's leading in life.

Flashcard 3-7 - Choices we must make

How were Farnham and Patricia to continue to get themselves ready for working for God overseas? They had come to know and love the Lord Jesus and had started to serve Him in small ways. It was going to be different in another country, with a difficult language, and to try to tell people, who might not want to know, all about the Lord Jesus.

How would you have prepared? God leads each of His children in different ways. We need to talk to God about each step in our lives - what He wants us to do, what subjects we should study at school, what further education to prepare for. He is interested in whether we join the Girl Guides, the Boys Brigade, the Bible class at church, or even if we take music lessons. All these are important to God. The friends we make are important to Him too. Do these friends help us to be better Christians, or do they lead us into bad ways? Especially important is the person that we shall choose to marry when we are older. Will you remember to talk to God about these things?

Flashcard 3-8 - To London for nursing training

“If I’m to go as a missionary with Farnham, I must get myself ready,” thought Patricia.

She had finished her schooling at Clarendon and Farnham had already gone away to a hospital in London to study to be a missionary doctor. It wasn’t very long before she followed him to London. She didn’t go to the same hospital but to another teaching hospital in the heart of London. In 1942, Patricia started training to be a nurse.

The Second World War was raging during the time of her nursing training and both these hospitals were in areas of much bombing. They were hard and sad times, but Patricia’s letters home were full of humour and stories of individual patients. In a little book of poems we can see something of the concern this nurse had for her patients, both young and old. We know that her real longing was to be able to share her faith with people who were afraid and in pain. For part of her training she was at a branch hospital on the outskirts of London, where her knowledge of French and German was used in nursing injured foreign troops, including Poles and some German prisoners-of-war. Many years later God was allowing her to use experiences He had given her as a small child.

Conclusion

What a long way she was from the quiet countryside of the Malvern Hills with the comfort and encouragement of her family around her. But Patricia was taking another step with God towards becoming the missionary we know she was to be.

What step will you take, even this week, in obedience to God, to lead you on for the life He is planning for you? Will you work hard at a subject that you find difficult at school, as it may be something God will use in future days? Will you, perhaps, make friends with someone who is lonely or ill? Ask God to show you what is the next step in His will for you.

Note to teacher

Years later all these memories were to be the background for the exciting children’s story “Treasures of the Snow”. Have you read this book, or seen the video? If not, you would really enjoy it. This book has been translated into many languages including Chinese and Arabic.

A woman in prison in Denmark wrote to say that she had read “Treasures of the Snow” and she had come to put her faith in Jesus Christ. This had completely changed her life. Her neighbour in the next cell had had the same experience when lent the book to read. Both were looking forward to getting out of prison with a completely new life to live for the Lord Jesus.

Review questions

- 1 What country did Patricia's family go to live in for a year? (Switzerland.)
- 2 What language did they learn there? (French.)
- 3 How does God use all the different things that happen in our lives? (To change us; to help us to do the things He wants us to do.)
- 4 How can you know how God wants you to serve Him? (Ask Him.)
- 5 What did Patricia's mother dedicate to God at the missionary meeting? (Her three children.)
- 6 How many of her children did God use in missionary service? (All three.)
- 7 Name two steps in our lives that we need to talk to God about. (Subjects at school; further studies; organisations we join; friends; who to marry.)
- 8 What profession did Patricia train for? (A nurse.)
- 9 How could Patricia use French and German in the hospital during the war? (To help her treat foreign soldiers.)
- 10 Patricia moved on from being a nurse to do something else for God. What was it? (To be a missionary.)

Lesson 4

Writing for God

Aim: To show how God may use any and all of our gifts and talents.

Lesson

While the Second World War raged on, the Tabeeba (Patricia St John) was quietly preparing herself for important missionary work - by training in London to be a nurse.

Flashcard 4-1 - Beginning to write

Writing had been Patricia's delight all through her life. At first she wrote just poems, which she was always losing - sending them away to the laundry in her pockets. She was very untidy and often left them under her pillow. Her mother used to collect them and then she presented her daughter with a little book in which she had copied them out most beautifully.

"I realised then that perhaps they were worth something."

Patricia said later, "I loved writing. I loved sort of scribbling things. I had diphtheria when I was eleven and spent six weeks in hospitals. I wrote a romance about Roundheads and Cavaliers, the two armies in the English civil war many hundreds of years ago."

All the time she was in London during the war, Patricia missed the beauties of the countryside, the Malvern Hills especially, and some of this is recorded in poems written about this time.

Trafalgar Square

"I met her in Trafalgar Square,
A little girl with country hair,
And eyes as blue as skies at night
Concealing depths of starry light;
I saw her feeding pigeons, where
The traffic roars around the Square.

And for an instant in the street
I saw white violets at her feet,
And far blue hills behind her rise
Half-merged with misty morning skies
And, hidden by a wisp of cloud,
One lonely skylark sang aloud.

One instant rolled away the years,
And left me standing, blind with tears."

After qualifying as a State Registered Nurse, Patricia did not stay to take the usual Midwifery course, that would have taught her how to look after mothers who were expecting babies. Her grandmother was very ill at home and required someone to nurse her, and she needed no extra persuasion to return home. It was then that the writing really began.

Flashcard 4-2 - Bedtime stories

Her nursing duties soon ended and Patricia became “housemother” for the littlest boarders at Clarendon School - mainly daughters of missionary families. In those days, the parents would sail to foreign countries, saying goodbye to their children for about four years. They would not see each other for all that time.

During the daytime at school all would be well. The children were busy and happy. At night though, the housemother often found a child crying, missing her parents. Patricia wanted to make bedtime very, very happy.

“When you’re undressed and ready for bed, come down in your dressing gowns for cocoa and biscuits,” the housemother would tell her little friends.

Down they would come with their teddies to sit around the fire in her cosy room and listen as she read aloud to them. She would read a long while - until they were sleepy. There was no more crying at night after this. However, it was very hard to find really helpful and happy books to read. In those days the only books with a Christian message were all about children in the slums or children who made beautiful speeches and often were dying of sad diseases. Some of the books we read and the videos we watch before going to sleep at night are not always very happy and helpful these days. Perhaps you could ask your teacher or someone at the library to help you choose good bedtime reading books.

The books Patricia had to read to her little girls were not a bit cheerful. So Patricia suddenly decided to write one herself.

She started to write “Tanglewood’s Secret”, which was all about Malvern and the places she knew and loved in her childhood. She thought the most comforting thing for the girls was to base it on the Good Shepherd. She had helped a shepherd when she was still a child in Malvern. In the Bible story, the sheep doesn’t have to do anything. It just bleats and the Good Shepherd does everything else - goes out to find it and carries it gently home. The lamb was just one out of a hundred, not very important. The little girls felt like that too. There were thirty of them; one couldn’t matter more than the others, they thought.

“How could they be shown that each individual little girl was important and special to the Good Shepherd?” wondered the loving school matron.

There is one sad bit in “Tanglewood’s Secret”, when Terry the gypsy boy died. At least, it seems sad and was very sad for Terry’s mother and friends, but for Terry, as a Christian, dying meant something so much better for him. His sick body was left behind, and the real Terry would be happy in Heaven with God. This bit was included in memory of the very first little boy Patricia nursed in hospital and who had died. She had been able to tell him the story of the Good Shepherd and that was such a comfort to both of them. Do you know the story of the Good Shepherd? Has He found you yet?

Flashcard 4-3 - The winning entry

“Tanglewood’s Secret” might have remained hand-written in a little notebook if Patricia’s older sister, Hazel, hadn’t been a persistent person. Hazel had seen that there was a story-writing competition for new authors, advertised by Scripture Union, publishers of children’s Christian books. She suggested to her sister that “Tanglewood’s Secret” should be sent in, but Patricia didn’t want to do that. She wasn’t at all keen. The days and weeks went by, and still the story wasn’t sent off. Hazel was absolutely determined.

“She more or less shut me in my bedroom,” the reluctant author remembered.

The story was sent off by the very last post. The result? Yes, “Tanglewood’s Secret” won the prize! Later it was printed and became a “best seller”. This was the first of a long list of very popular children’s Christian books. These books have been used by God to lead many people to know and love the Lord Jesus - and not just children, adults too!

Flashcard 4-4 - Writing for the Lord

Later, Clarendon school moved to North Wales. The time spent there gave her the idea and the background for the family book “Rainbow Garden”. One day Patricia was climbing in the hills near Llanwrst where there are two lakes joined by a stream. She found a sort of hut in a hollow, which looked as though someone had tried to live there. That was what gave her the idea for some of the plot. Once she did help to catch a thief and that went into the story too.

Do you enjoy writing? Maybe God has given you a special talent for writing that you could use for Him.

Could you write a letter to some relative, like a cousin or a friend and explain to them how you came to know Jesus and what a wonderful Saviour He is to you? Your letter could be the first link in the chain, in helping him to trust in Jesus.

Would you be brave enough to put something in one of your compositions for school, perhaps how much you love the Lord Jesus? That would be a very good way of letting the teacher know that you believe in Jesus.

If you can write poetry, you could write a little verse for our missionaries or for a sick or elderly person, to encourage them.

Flashcard 4-5 - North Africa at last

A year or so later, in 1949, Patricia went to look after her brother who was in charge of an English Mission Hospital in North Africa. Her needs in this new part of her life were provided by money received from her writing. She worked for a year in the hospital and began learning Arabic, a very, very difficult language.

The town where she first worked was a fascinating place. The whole town is high on a hill with white houses up the cliff. Her bedroom was always full of sunshine and there were oranges growing everywhere. She was thrilled with it all. However when she went to the hospital, she didn't find that such a wonderful place. This was a long time ago and there was terrible poverty and illness, as well as sickness from hunger and starvation. There was too little money and bad housing.

Because this was a Mission Hospital, there was always time to tell the patients and their relatives why the English doctors and nurses had left their home to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" - the good news (Mark 16:15). There in the Mission Hospital were many, many people who had not heard that the Lord Jesus, God's only Son, had come to Earth to show them the way to the Great Creator God. They had not heard how the Lord Jesus had died to take the punishment for their sins. This is the Gospel - the "good news" - that Christians had to share in the hospital. Most of the patients were Moslem and although they believed that Jesus was a great prophet, they didn't believe the most important thing. They did not believe that He is God the Son, the One Who loved even them and Who is the promised Saviour of all people. It was hard for them to believe this, when their religious teachers told them something different.

Flashcard 4-6 - Call to the mountain towns and villages

There was a boy in the hospital who had a terrible disease of the leg (osteomyelitis) and it was such a thrill when he became a Christian.

After that he used to say, "Why do we have to come all the way down from the mountains to hear this Christian message?"

He lived up in the mountains in a small, isolated village, with no doctor or nurses. Few Westerners lived up that way. The Moslem

Read the verse from your Bible, or have an older child or helper read it.

villagers would not be pleased to see Christians coming to live with them.

A thought came to Patricia, “Should she go with this lad to his village if he got better and was discharged from hospital? There would be opportunity to teach all the truth about the Lord Jesus.”

The Moslem religion teaches half-truths, i.e. that Jesus is a prophet, but not God the Son. It is always important to know all the truth, as just part of it can be very dangerous. Imagine that it is a dark night and your home is up on the third storey. A fire has broken out but I tell you to jump as the firemen are under the window and they will catch you. But I do not tell you all. I do not tell you which window and you jump out of the wrong one! You would be killed. Half a truth would do you no good at all.

Flashcard 4-7 - God’s special call

This boy did get better. Patricia and her brother Farnham went with him in the car to take him to his mountain home. They started very, very early in the morning, because it would get terribly hot by the middle of the day. They stopped at the roadside for breakfast and the missionaries took time to read their Bible and pray as they always did at the beginning of every day. It is really important to take time to be with God each morning. Listen to what God wants to say to you in the Bible and then talk to Him about the day ahead in prayer.

Recently the Tabeeba had been reading a little of the book of Ezekiel each morning and that day she had got as far as the chapter which says, “My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them” (Ezekiel 34:6).

She stopped and re-read the last bit. The sheep were scattered and no-one was seeking or searching for them!

As she looked up, all she could see were fold upon fold of hills and valleys and little villages. Suddenly that verse seemed to her very like the Lord Jesus speaking. She just knew that she must go and live up in this town. She and Farnham had talked about this town before, and they knew that no-one had ever been there to tell the people about the Lord Jesus. There were people, just like lost sheep, wandering over these mountains and God wanted someone to go and “seek and search for them” and to take the good news of the Gospel to them.

After the boy was left in his home with his mother, Farnham and Patricia returned to the hospital. Back in the city, she felt more and more that she should go to live and work in that small town up in the mountains. The problem was that she was taking care of Farnham and working as a nurse in the hospital. So she was needed there, too. However, God was working out His plans and before long Farnham

Read the verse from your Bible, or have an older child or helper read it.

became engaged and then he married (and so he didn't need his sister to look after him). Also, another missionary nurse came out to the hospital. Patricia really was free to go.

Patricia had been learning Arabic from another lady missionary, but hadn't had much time for language study whilst working hard all day in the hospital. However, after just one year, she knew enough of the language to go to the little town. There she stayed, sometimes on her own, for five whole years.

Flashcard 4-8 - Would Patricia be accepted?

The little walled town was under Spanish rule at that time, and there was a colony of Spanish families living just outside. There were very, very few Europeans living inside the town, just a few Spanish ladies who had married local men. Patricia was the very first English person to live within the walls. The people were all Moslem. How would they treat this stranger? Would they allow this English Christian nurse to come and live with them? Would she be able to find a home? Would the people be kind and welcoming? Would they listen to the message about the Lord Jesus? How do you think you would feel in this situation? Let's find out next week.

Conclusion

If you have tried to tell your family and friends about the Lord Jesus, was it easy or difficult? Have you prayed for help and for a good opportunity? If you would like help, I can give you a leaflet which you can use to interest people. Come and see me afterwards if you would like one.

Note to teacher

Some of Patricia's books are now available as film and video. They have been translated into more than 26 languages. "Treasures of the Snow" has been read in Russian on the weekly Children's Hour programme, going into Russia from Monte Carlo radio. Not all of Patricia's writings are for children - some are for teenagers and a few biographies for adults.

At the end of class you could introduce a little project based on one of the writing ideas. The children could work in pairs (an older one with a younger perhaps). You would have to be prepared with paper, postcards, envelopes and/or stamps.

Review questions

- 1 What was Patricia's hobby, something she loved to do? (Writing.)
- 2 What was Patricia's job at Clarendon School? (To be housemother for the smallest girls.)
- 3 How did she make bedtime a happy time for them? (Gave them cocoa and biscuits; read stories to them.)

A number of tracts suitable for children are produced by Child Evangelism Fellowship® of Europe and are available from your CEF® National Office. If you need an address, contact the European Headquarters (address at the front of this book).

- 4 What name of Jesus is used in the story to explain how each one of us is important to Him? (The Good Shepherd.)
- 5 What is the name of Patricia's first book which was printed? (Tanglewood's Secret.)
- 6 What is the good news that the Christians could share with the patients in the mission hospital? (How Jesus died to take the punishment for their sins.)
- 7 What were Patricia and her brother able to do for one boy when he got out of hospital? (Take him back to his village in the car.)
- 8 What animal reminded Patricia of how people are lost without the Lord Jesus? (Sheep.)
- 9 Why did Patricia's brother not need her to look after him any more? (He got married.)
- 10 What religion were the people in the village where she was able to go and live? (Moslem.)

Lesson 5

Women and girls begin to hear the Gospel

Aim: To teach that God always gives help when problems come.

Lesson

Last week where did we leave the Tabeeba? Yes, in a little town up in the North African mountains, the only English lady in a town full of North Africans. How did she feel now that she had left the Christian hospital on the coast to live in a place where no other Christians had ever lived?

She was in a town where all the people believed that the Lord Jesus was only a prophet and not the ever-living Son of God. She longed to share the full truth of the Gospel with them, but would anyone listen? If they listened, would they believe?

Flashcard 5-1 - Teaching the street boys

At first the only people who would talk to the Tabeeba or visit the little home next door to the fish market were the barefoot, ragged street boys, the ones we heard about at the beginning of our story. These boys came in for food and shelter. They would spend the day begging or earning a little food in some way, and then when it became dark they would arrive at her doorstep. She used to cook very simple food for them, because she had little money, few ingredients and knew little about their country's type of cooking. They would have bean mush and bread or olives. Whatever it was, it was received very eagerly. In faltering Arabic, Patricia would talk to them and teach them simple Bible stories. They became very, very friendly.

But Patricia wanted to reach others too with the Gospel message. Everyone in that land needed to know that the Lord Jesus could save from the punishment they deserved for their sins. How would she be able to do this? The men would not listen to teaching from a woman but the women and girls would be allowed to talk to her. As a nurse, the Tabeeba would have special opportunities.

It took a long time to start the medical work which she hoped would allow her to go right into the surrounding homes and talk to the women. There was a Spanish doctor who came to the little town two or three times a week and gave free treatment. Since most husbands wouldn't let their wives be examined by a foreign man these women had no medical treatment.

Sometimes, as with Patricia, you may have to wait a long time for a good opportunity to tell your friends about the Lord Jesus, but if you are patient God will show you the right time.

Flashcard 5-2 - Medical work and the seventh day feast

One day, a girl came to the door and said, “Zohra sends for you.”

Patricia went along and found that it was the “seventh day feast” - meaning the seventh day after a new baby was born.

Everybody in the room was eating. A sheep had been killed and bread baked. It was a tremendous feast. The baby had become sick and refused to feed, so the guests were told to come quickly, for it was important to get the birthday feast over before the baby died. The guests arrived in large numbers, prepared to enjoy themselves immensely. But the mother had desperately wanted her baby son to live, so she had sent the serving girl for the Tabeeba, the English nurse. And she had come at once.

When she came into the crowded room, Patricia saw that the baby was lying in his mother’s arms, dying. The air was thick in that windowless room, steamy with fumes of hot oil and noisy with the chatter of dozens of women. The baby was gasping for breath but he was not dying of pneumonia, as she had expected. He had been too weak to suck and so he was dehydrated, which means he was dying for need of a drink.

The Tabeeba did something which everyone thought was very strange. She got a spoon and a cup. She boiled them in a pan of water to be sure that they were very clean. Then she used these to feed the sick baby gently with milk from his own mother. The family all stood around and looked on in amazement. Patricia was praying as she worked. She prayed for the baby, for his mother and for all the family. Before she left she showed the mother how to continue feeding the baby like this until he got well enough to suck milk for himself.

It was a very simple treatment, but to the family it must have seemed like a miracle. God helped the Tabeeba to use her nursing knowledge. This brought great opportunities to work with the women.

Flashcard 5-3 - A washing lesson

The Tabeeba started a daily clinic each afternoon in her little home and she could hardly cope with all the medical needs. At this time she was so glad that she had not trained to be a midwife and so did not deliver babies. If she could have done this type of work all her time would have been spent on medical work and there would have been no time to spend teaching the women, the street boys and the young girls about the Lord Jesus. She had come to help them, but her first calling had been to tell the lost sheep about the Good Shepherd Who was looking for them.

The beggar girls came to “school” in the mornings. Someone came to help Patricia run this school. They used to be taught knitting and sewing.

The girls were terribly poor. One child used to beg in the fish market and when she had begged enough she would come, with four rows of sardines pinned on her. Each night she slept with the family goat. She really did smell awful!

Sodea was the smallest girl and she always rushed straight for the nurse's lap.

One day Patricia said to Mfuddla, Sodea's sister, "Don't you think you could possibly wash Sodea's dress? If I give you a piece of soap, could you wash her dress, Mfuddla?"

Mfuddla thought that was a wonderful idea and she rushed home. It was a very cold, rainy day. About half-an-hour later she was back with her little sister in a soaking wet dress.

"Why ever did you put the dress back on?" cried Patricia.

"Well, you don't think she's got another one, do you?" was the indignant reply.

It seems Mfuddla had put her little sister in the bucket - in the dress! They had come back quickly to show nurse before the dress got dirty again. One of Patricia's petticoats and a pyjama jacket that had belonged to Farnham was found to dress the shivering little girl. They all thought it was the latest Paris fashion!

Flashcard 5-4 - A clockwork mouse

Friends who knew about the work the Tabeeba was doing would collect helpful articles, such as clothes for children and things for the school classes. Sometimes they included some small toys. They probably never knew what was going to be of most use out in North Africa. Perhaps there are things that you could collect to send to a missionary somewhere. Do write first though, to find out what could be useful.

One day, during the girls' morning class, Patricia thought it would be fun to let off a toy clockwork mouse that friends from England had sent in a parcel. She wound it up and as the girls were just finishing their knitting the little mouse was set running in through the door. They screamed and screamed! First they thought it was a real mouse and jumped on the mattresses.

After a while they realised that it was not real, but they just wanted it to go on and on.

"Do it again!" they screamed and jumped on the mattresses.

At last they went off home.

Flashcard 5-5 - The women's Bible Study

Some of the women had started to come to a special Bible Study meeting. Usually, only a small group would come. This afternoon the

meeting was packed out - never had there been so many there! The Tabeeba was thrilled, even though they all came at different times (they never could be persuaded to come all at once). She preached again and again as new ones arrived - always in faltering Arabic. Finally she said they would have a cup of tea. After that she waited, and waited, for them to go to their homes, but they just sat and sat.

After a while, someone said, "We came to see the mouse."

The mouse! Ah! That was why so many had come that day. After that they came week after week. Sometimes she had as many as seven meetings in an afternoon. The women came when their husbands had finished their lunch and they were then free. Patricia was the only one in the town who had a watch. Time did not mean anything at all.

Flashcard 5-6 - A sheep is found

The first woman to become a Christian was a very poor woman. She had been married as a girl of twelve to a man who took drugs and was a horrible person. Her first child, a boy, died when she was fourteen, and then she had another baby, this time a precious little girl. The woman came to Patricia when this little girl was about six.

"Can I come and work for you?" she asked.

The Tabeeba hadn't any money to pay anyone for money was very short in those days.

"My husband is using all the money for drugs and we're starving," pleaded the little mother.

Help was needed - lots of people came to the dispensary, many girls came to the school, there was cooking and cleaning.

"Well," Patricia said, "I really can't give you much, but if you'd like to come and spend the day with me, with your daughter, you can both eat with me."

One day, the little mother came sobbing bitterly.

"When I got home my husband had taken everything in the house and gone off with another woman," she cried. She continued crying and calling him names.

"If he's so wicked, why are you so upset?" Patricia asked her.

"I'm not upset about him, but my husband has taken everything in the house."

Patricia was able to give her some essential things to help. However a week later she came again, even more desperate.

"My husband has taken my little girl to be a slave for his new wife. She's expecting a baby and wants the little girl to get water from the well each day."

The only time mother and daughter could meet was when they were at the well. The little girl was very thin and was getting covered in sores and was very homesick for her mother. All those years ago there was nothing that could be done.

Flashcard 5-7 - An urgent prayer

The mother and Patricia would read the Bible and pray together every day.

One day she said, “If your God really answers prayer, pray that my daughter will be able to come back to me.”

Oh dear, that seemed such an unlikely thing to happen. A child like that was worth her weight in gold as a little slave. They could do nothing for her. But they did pray.

Much later, winter had come and one night, when the Tabeeba was in bed, there was a persistent knocking at the front door. She opened the door and someone burst in, pushing past her into the passage. She had a big bundle on her back. It was Fatima, and the bundle was her little girl, a very ill little girl. Hurriedly, the nurse put the sick child into her own bed and realised she had pneumonia.

“I must take her temperature and keep her warm,” she thought as she got some medicine and generally took care of the poor little girl.

When they sat down together at last, Patricia asked, “Tell me what happened.”

“The neighbour had told me that my daughter was ill,” said Fatima, “and I was lying in bed worrying about her. Then suddenly it seemed as though Someone was telling me to go to her. I thought it was Jesus speaking to me, so, in spite of the rain and the late hour, I got up and went to my husband’s house. I could hear the child crying, so I tried the door. It was unlocked! I pushed my way in and stood still, until I realised that the child was alone in the house.”

So the mother had picked her child up, put her on her back and hurried around to the Tabeeba’s house.

It was not until later that the full story became known. The husband had gone off on some sort of business trip. The new wife was very worried because she knew that the child was very ill and she thought, “If the child dies while my husband is away, he’ll think I’ve killed her. It would be much better if I’m not here.”

So she just put the child on the bed and went away to spend the night with her mother.

She thought, “If the child dies in the night, I’ll just tell my husband that I wasn’t there.”

Strangely enough, neither husband nor new wife ever enquired about the little girl again. But mother and daughter were able to stay with

Patricia from that time on. God had heard and answered that poor little mother's prayer in an amazing way. God used this very difficult time for that young mother, to bring her to understand the Gospel message. Then He gave her a task to do for Him. She would take the nurse out to the surrounding villages. Because Fatima was there with this strange western nurse, everybody came to the house where they would be staying. Fatima was wonderful with the children. It was like having a North African sister for Patricia.

Flashcard 5-8 - Problems with the religious leaders

After five years with the people in the little mountain town, Patricia went back to the city hospital. She left behind a tiny group that had become Christians, although only a very few remained faithful. They had been forbidden by the Moslem leaders to keep coming for Bible teaching and they were frightened to disobey this command. So there was little more that the Tabeeba could do for the people there. However, another missionary had come to live outside the town who might be able to carry on the teaching.

During her years in North Africa, Patricia would go home occasionally to England or else to Switzerland for summer holidays. Even when she was a white-haired lady she still enjoyed adventure. Once she had the excitement of travelling back to England in a minibus with her brother, his wife and their family of small children. They would drive through Spain and France sleeping in the fields at night. One time she had to return home for nine months to nurse her father after a heart attack.

Before the government took over the Mission Hospital in 1975, Patricia was living in a house with some of the student nurses. With the government take-over, Farnham was no longer in charge and so he returned to England with his family. However, Patricia stayed on in North Africa to nurse her aged and frail mother and her sister-in-law's elderly mother too. Both were too old and sick to be taken back to England. They all moved into a flat, in the care of the Tabeeba and loving national helpers.

Conclusion

Eventually the old ladies died and, after 27 years in North Africa, Patricia returned to live in England. Again she was needed to care for an elderly relative, this time the aunt who had become the headmistress of Clarendon School. She came to live near Coventry with her sister Hazel and she wrote many more books. In researching for her writing, she did much more travelling in Africa, the Middle East and other places. Working for God may lead to all sorts of exciting projects.

During her time near Coventry, Patricia had a club for children in her garage. They played games of many sorts, but always there was a

“Bible slot” (as the young people called it) at the end of each meeting. Her interest in needy children of the world has continued. She helped to start a Christian action group called “Global Care”. Since the late 1970s this group has sent aid to homeless children in some of the poorest parts of the world.

As you have listened to the story of the Tabeeba, have you seen how God can use someone who truly loves Him, right from childhood into old age? God will give **you** just such an exciting life if you really trust and follow Him. Maybe you are wondering what God can have planned for your life. Why not ask Him now to show you, step by step, how to live for Him?

Perhaps, however, you are not sure that you are in God’s family. The Tabeeba proved that the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does change lives. After class, ask me to show you from the Bible just what He wants to do for **you**.

Review questions

- 1 What is the name that the children in the village gave to Patricia? (Tabeeba.)
- 2 What language did the people speak in that country? (Arabic.)
- 3 What did the Tabeeba do for the street boys who came to visit her? (She gave them food and told them Bible stories.)
- 4 Although the Tabeeba was able to help people with their medical problems, what was her main concern? (To tell them about their need of Jesus as Saviour.)
- 5 How did Mfuddla wash her little sister’s dress? (She put her in her dress into a bucket of water.)
- 6 Why did many women come to the Tabeeba’s Bible Study one afternoon? (To see the clockwork mouse.)
- 7 Why did one woman want to come and work for the Tabeeba? (Her husband was using their money for drugs.)
- 8 Who showed the woman that she should go to her little girl? (Jesus spoke to her.)
- 9 What did the Moslem leaders forbid the village Christians to do? (To have teaching from the Bible.)
- 10 How can you know what God has planned for your life? (Ask Him to show you step by step.)

Copy, cut out and keep in your Bible



Summary of steps for counselling the child who wants to come to Christ

Make sure the child understands about

God

Who is God?
God made us. He speaks to us through the Bible.
God is holy and pure. He loves us.

Sin

What is sin?
Sin is disobeying God's commands. It is against God.
Speak about specific sins.
The child is a sinner by nature and act. (We sin because we are sinners.)
Sin deserves punishment.

The Saviour

Who alone can take away your sin?
God the Son died on the cross for sinners.
The Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.
He is Lord of all.

Explain how to be saved

Explain what the Lord wants us to do, and what He will do.
Use a Bible verse (*John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; Acts 16:31; Romans 6:23 or 10:13*).
What does the Lord want you to do?
What will the Lord do?
Warn about difficulties.
Ask: "Do you want to trust Christ, or would you rather wait?"
Encourage the child to pray audibly (if ready).

Speak about assurance of salvation

Go back to the Bible verse you used.
Speak about a changed life.
Tell him what the person who is truly trusting in Christ can know.

Give (later) some advice about the Christian life

Read and obey your Bible.
Talk to God, our heavenly Father.
Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
Ask God to forgive you when you sin.
Meet with other Christians.
Remember the Lord promises: "*I will never leave you*" (*Heb 13:5*).