

# CHRYSALIS NEWSLETTER

## Cultivating Christian Imagination in Children

*"... [W]hatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." - Philippians 4:8, KJV*

One of the goals of our AMO® Program is to nurture and disciple the *whole* child for Christ—spirit, mind, conscience, and imagination—with beauty, truth and moral goodness for individual and cultural transformation. AMO's curricular components contain the DNA that cultivates this divine process:

1. The power of the *gospel* to regenerate the child's spirit as a new believer in Christ;
2. The power of *God's Word* to illumine his heart and renew his mind;
3. The power of *biblical principles* to guide reasoning and direct the will to righteous deeds for Christian character;
4. The power of *story* to transcend the mediocrity of the 21st century pop culture and inspire godly imagination.

As we travel around the world to various evangelical churches, schools, and NGOs, we find that most pastors, youth leaders, and Christian parents are content to let the popular culture disciple their children. As the culture grows darker and children spend endless hours in non-reflective, media-driven activities, their imaginations become dulled, starved, and corrupted. Manipulated and dominated by the hidden agendas of media program developers through the internet, television, movies, and video games, children are bombarded with visual images, many of which are crass, immoral, and demonic. These images and subliminal messages amuse and entertain rather than inspire and ennoble. They portray relationships as fragmented and fleeting instead of coherent and enduring. In many cases, programs are full of deceptive wonder and illusion instead of truth and reality. Ungodly images abound and in some instances, good is seen as evil and evil is proclaimed as good.

### Understanding the Imagination

There is little teaching that comes from the church on nurturing a Christian imagination in children. We have found that many Christians are ignorant of this topic believing the imagination has only to do with dark magic and demonic influences. Many do not comprehend the imagination as *God's gift of wonder*. The imagination is a God-given capacity or innate power within the soul of man to form images. Understanding the imagination as God purposed for man's ennoblement and creativity begins with a biblical view of God and His creation. Man, the crowning glory of creation, was made in God's image and bountifully endowed with language, reason, and imagination. We all imagine. Consider the young boy who reads about noble deeds and envisions himself as honorable and courageous, or an artist who views a majestic scene and paints

an enduring work of beauty. Further, take into account the individual who hears God's Word and receives a revelation of the true and living God and is transformed. With our imaginations cultivated by beauty, truth, and moral goodness, we are able to daydream, enter into creative expression, and come to know the *true* and the *real*. We are spared having to spend time with illusions and are able to transcend the mediocre to envision beyond ourselves. God fashioned us in His image to affect culture by dreaming dreams, performing virtuous deeds, and telling a good story with our lives. Just imagine . . .

The highest exercise of our imagination, however, is to respond to God in reverent wonder. This is vividly portrayed in the Scriptures when Isaiah beheld the Lord high and lifted up in His temple (Isaiah 6:1-3), in Ezekiel's vision of the wheel and the likeness of God's glory (Ezekiel 1), and when John saw the Lord in the midst of the seven candlesticks (Revelation 1:12-16). When the imagination is illumined by the Holy Spirit, God is visible in a way not possible either through our physical senses or our intellect. Through the imagination we behold the greatness, the beauty, the majesty, and the glory of the Lord, and we are changed into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Truly, God's gift of wonder has power for boundless good. Yet, since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, man's imagination is vulnerable to unspeakable evil. This is first recorded in Genesis 6:5 when "God saw that every imagination of man's heart was continually evil." As judgment, God sent a global flood to destroy mankind. Only one righteous man and his family were saved. There are also stern warnings concerning the abuse of the imagination in the New Testament. In Romans 1:21-32, men are described as turning from the true and living God and becoming "vain in their imaginations." They become lovers of self and the world. They give their minds and hearts over to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). They exchange God's truth for distortion and lies. They reject the true and living God and bow

to deceptive gods of destruction. Professing to be wise, they become fools and, as a result, their hearts are grossly darkened, and God gives them over to the all-consuming lust of their own hearts. The complete surrender of the imagination to God and the continual vigilance to keep the imagination pure in obedience to Christ become a type of spiritual discipline. The ultimate fruit of this discipline is transformation into the likeness of Christ and the provision of God's peace.

The best time to cultivate a Christian imagination is during childhood. Young children have a natural sense of wonder. Their



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minds and hearts are malleable and their memories tenacious. For these reasons, we should intentionally guard and feed our children's imaginations with images of magnificence. Yet, for many children in our present world, just the opposite is true.

The centerpiece of our AMO® Program is children's literature and accompanying arts and crafts. Classic stories are read aloud to the children as they learn to sit still, reflect upon the noble characters and themes and let their imaginations enter the stories. Literature and the arts are powerful tools that teach children about the deep things of life. The classics, with their Christian ideals and universal ideas, cultivate the imagination and inspire great creativity. Combined with reading God's Word, the spiritual potential of children is nourished and they determine to pattern their own lives after the heroes and heroines they meet. Unlike the digital toys of modernity, the classics help nurture the Christian imagination that truly inspires children to dream God-sized dreams and aspire to live a nobler life.

*Excerpted from AMO® Teacher Manual  
Elizabeth Youmans, Ed.D. & Evie Tindall, Ed.D.*

## Summer Apprenticeships

### MAY

#### *Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:*

Cristina Incháustegui taught her second World Vision AMO® training this year. There were many testimonies of changed hearts and renewed minds. Many had never read a classic or colored a coloring page before.

#### *YWAM, Puerto Rico:*

Cristina Incháustegui taught our Rudiments of Christian Education course to the PCYM YWAM class in San Juan. She also invested time in many of the married YWAM couples with children and parents at a local church who want to use AMO® with their children.

#### *Bogota, Colombia:*

Our Level 2 Apprenticeship was initiated on Skype with 10 Manantial AMO® Program directors.

### JUNE

#### *Bogota, Colombia:*

Jacqi Gough taught a five-day Principles of Curriculum Design course to the Manantial Christian Academy lead teachers.

Jacqi and Lucrecia Ortiz taught an AMO® training to nearly 100 youth leaders from over 40 Colombian churches.

[amoprogram.com](http://amoprogram.com)

#### *Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:*

Cristina Incháustegui taught four AMO® workshops at the regional ACSI convention.

#### *La Romana, Dominican Republic:*

Cristina Incháustegui trained 50 classroom teachers to use AMO® in conjunction with a long-term project initiated by Edify. Their goal is to reach 280,000 school children in five years.



AMO® Apprenticeship, World Vision, Santo Domingo

### JULY

#### *Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:*

Jacqi, Lucrecia, and Cristina trained 95 classroom teachers in two more AMO® training programs for Edify.

### AUGUST

#### *Nuevo Laredo, Mexico:*

Cristina Incháustegui taught an AMO® training to 35 teachers from five Amistad Presbyterian border ministries. The Lord opened many hearts and minds to the truths of Christian education. There will be six new AMO® Programs initiated this fall.

#### *Aguascalientes, Mexico:*

Jacqi and Cristina taught a five-day Rudiments of Christian Education seminar to founders of schools and classroom and seminary teachers from various provinces of Mexico. There will be much fruit from this training as God opens Mexico for us.

### SEPTEMBER

#### *Singapore 4-14 Global Summit*

Over 1,000 leaders from 100 nations gathered in Singapore for the third annual summit. Elizabeth Youmans facilitated the Seven Spheres Transformation workshop to include teachings and resources from YWAM, Puerto Rico, DNA, and AMO®. Board member, Deborah Edwards, accompanied Elizabeth and presented our AMO® Power Point with great reception. We met many Asian children's ministry leaders.



Elizabeth, Eng Hoe Lim, & Deborah

New  
**am**   
Nurturing the child's heart for God

## New Teacher Guide



Our Little House in the Big Woods guide is now translated into SPANISH. This great American classic, written by Laura Ingalls Wilder, memorializes the pioneering spirit of the families who settled the US prairies and western territories in the 19th century. The theme centers on the love of family and how healthy families build healthy communities.

This guide contains 18 scripted lesson plans, 7 beautifully illustrated coloring pages, graphic organizers, vocabulary cards, 8 arts and crafts lesson plans, and instructions for holding a pioneer family picnic celebration. **\$ 19.95**

For use in academic classrooms;  
Sunday school programs;  
after school programs; and  
summer school programs

**Purchase online:**  
**[amoprogram.com](http://amoprogram.com)**

**or call toll free:**  
**877-838-8808**

## Upcoming Events

**September 26-30:** AMO® Apprenticeship, Food for the Hungry, Dominican Republic

**October 25-27:** Teach a Man to Fish Conference, Nicaragua

**November 27-December 2:** AMO® Apprenticeship, Food for the Hungry, Lima, Peru

**December 5-9:** AMO® Apprenticeship, Food for the Hungry, Pucallpa, Peru