

Teaching Nathan

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I hadn't been this nervous since I preached my first sermon two years earlier. That's what I was thinking in September 2010 as I was about to begin my first confirmation class with Nathan. It wasn't because this was my first time teaching Catechism. I had been teaching Catechism for two years. So why was I so nervous teaching this first class to Nathan? Nathan is completely deaf.

I had some ability to communicate with Nathan. I had taken three months of sign language class from a WELS member in Topeka, Kan. In addition, Nathan's aunt Jenny, a member of our church, knew some sign language. She would be by my side throughout the classes, helping me communicate with Nathan. But I still was extremely nervous. I knew that "faith comes from hearing the message" as Paul says in Romans, but if Nathan couldn't hear the message, through my limited signs, could Nathan have faith?



All my fears were quickly taken away. An amazing thing happened when we started class. Nathan understood the message. More importantly, Nathan believed the message. The Holy Spirit worked through our limited signs. He worked through the language barrier, and he changed Nathan's heart from a self-righteous heart to a heart full of faith. Nathan went from believing that he was saved, "because he was good" as he told me in the first class, to believing that he was saved "through the blood of Christ" as he confessed on his Confirmation Day.

Yes, there were misunderstandings. There were times when we became frustrated because of bad communication. Through it all, the Lord was gracious, allowing Nathan to "hear the message" so that he could believe and be made a child of God. To God alone be glory.

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