



International Bible Society

## *My First Bible to North Caucasus*

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### **At least seven times a day hold a child ... teach him goodness**

***“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”***

*Romans 12:21 [NIV]*



From the road we see the snowy peaks of the Caucasus Mountains. The North Caucasus area of the Russian Federation lies between the Black and Caspian Seas. We are driving to Jessentuky, a small town located near Kislovodsk, the renowned health resort. I was told that President Putin visits this beautiful country to renew his energy. However, we are not here to be refreshed by mineral springs; rather, we have come to visit abandoned children and orphans. In November, the days shorten so dusk arrives by mid-afternoon. We enter the director's office and sense a cozy, friendly atmosphere. When we meet Larisa Grigorievna, the director of the orphanage, we soon realize that she is the person who has established and maintains this atmosphere.

“If we want to bring up the children to be kind people we should touch, hold them at least seven times a day, and in the case of orphans it must be even more,” stated the director of the orphanage, “That is only way that evil can be overcome.” The words of Paul immediately came to my mind: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (*Romans 12:21, NIV*) And also: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things.” (*Philippians 4:8, NIV*) There is proof of understanding the gospel when people do good. Moreover, if orphans understand and accept that God created them and that they are beloved by Him, then they can trust God for help to overcome life's challenges.

Later on, we recognize that the Bible and its message is close to the director's heart. We have the opportunity to see that she applies the attitude through all she does. She speaks with enthusiasm about *My First Bible*, provided by International Bible Society. Reading the book helps the children to build self-esteem, dignity and gives them hope for the future. The Bible stories show them many values to follow. “After I started to read the Bible, I recognized what I should have learned long ago. As I read the Bible again and again, I learn and become inspired... I am so grateful that you gave *My First Bible* to the children. By reading this book, the children can learn about goodness so that they have a chance to become kind people. You can hardly imagine what it means for them! Children read the book before going to sleep, and they take care of the book. It has become their



own “chief treasure”. Even the notorious pilferers neither steal the book nor tear it because they respect the content of the book. There are fifteen children in each dormitory room, but not a single *My First Bible* has been stolen or damaged.”

**Here are some testimonies of the children:**



“I like the story of Samson most; he overcame even a lion. I learned I must not cut my hair short and become weak,” added with smile. “I also have learned to pray so I can pray for my parents, that God will bless them.”

*Kolja*

“The Resurrection of Christ is my favourite story. I did not know it before, but I have learned the story from this book. I also pray for my parents to be protected by God.”

*Igor*

“I am reading the book every night before going to sleep. I have learned that God is in heaven and He is ready to help us. We should ask Him for help. I want to express my gratefulness to the Heavenly Father for my life and for all I have.”

*Ella*

“The story of the crucifixion spoke to me the most. Jesus died also for me.”

*Dima*

“I like the story about the journeys of Apostle Paul – he traveled a lot and preached about salvation in Jesus. I like traveling and love Jesus as well.”

*Kolja*

Not only children can be reached by the Word of God but also adults. There is a psychiatrist who regularly comes to the orphanage. Once she attended a meeting of the children and listened as they prayed. Later she confessed: “When I heard the abandoned children pray for their parents to stop drinking so that the family could be restored again, I was touched deeply. I saw the power of message of the Bible and realized that this is where one can find real hope! I also desired to know the source of this hope for my life.”



Director Larisa Grigorievna believes that adults become kind because as children they were held, touched at least seven times daily. However, there are not enough hands for all children to be held seven times a day. Yet, there is hope even for them. Knowing Jesus as Friend and Savior, they can experience His kindness touching them and saying, “I love you my child”.

**“Orphans are balancing between good and evil so we should give them a helping hand,”**

said the director of the North Caucasus’ orphanage.

*My First Bible* given by International Bible Society is one way to offer God’s help to the children.

Please join us in our effort to offer a helping hand to abandoned children and orphans.

Remember Jesus’ words:

**“I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”**

*(Mathew 2:41 NIV)*