

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING BIBLE EFFECTIVELY TO PRESCHOOLERS

1. Attention Getting:

By using and changing our tone of voice, body language, and eye contact, we can more effectively hold the attention of the preschoolers. We must convey from our demeanor that what we are about to say is . . . exciting, important, fun to know, and "very cool." Also, if we feel like the Bible is exciting, important, fun to know, and "very cool," we will be even more effective in getting our young students excited about the Bible and what we have to say about it. We need to set the stage and the mood for our listeners. They will never be more impressed by what we are saying than we ourselves are about it.

2. Speaking Their Language:

"Kid-speak" is what the young children understand. If we use anything else they will be confused and bored and "lost in the dust." To learn their own special language, listen to them talk to each other in play - the words, phrases, sentence structure, and expressions that they use. Listening to them will help us to key in to their language and enable us to connect with them verbally to help us more effectively teach them about God.

3. Knowing Their Limit:

When teaching anything, especially Bible we must be sensitive to their limits of self-control and attention span. If they are not able to concentrate and focus their attention to what we are saying or doing, then we need to do something else and try at another time. Pushing these limits unreasonably will frustrate them as much as us and could leave them with a negative view of Bible time. Example: "Bible is boring, too long, and makes me unhappy." Never make Bible a "drag" or a "have-to" and it will probably become a request. No Bible time is better than a negative Bible time.

4. Being Creative and Emotional:

"Dress up" accounts, sing songs, act out accounts, build things, or make up games. Make it an active experience in which the children themselves are involved. When the whole child is engaged, he remembers and learns. Children love drama, so be a dramatic storyteller. Be descriptive: make the sounds of lions when talking about lions in a story OR if the king is mad, then SHOUT!

The different accounts that we will discover with our children, all have different moods or atmospheres to them. Highlight these! Examples:

*Daniel and the lions' den is *scary*.

*King Herod killing all the boy babies is *sad* and *mean*.

*People being healed is *happy* and *comforting*.

As we search out ways to convey these feelings and moods, our children will "catch" the meaning we are trying to convey. We must connect emotionally with our audience if we want them to connect emotionally with what we are saying to them.

5. Filled With Variety:

Balancing our uses of storytelling, discussion, reading, painting, coloring, making murals, acting and drama, singing, cutting and gluing and utilization of props will help keep Bible fresh and interesting to both children and teachers. Strive to be creative!

6. Just The Necessities:

When teaching about an event, be sure to discard any facts that are not age appropriate, not interesting to them or not relevant to our main point. Too much unexciting information is often confusing. Decide what information your group of children will benefit from currently and leave the rest for a later time.

7. Nurtured By Prayer And A Teachable Heart:

When teaching young children, we need to remember that what we present is basic knowledge to us but is revelation to them. They need the same sensitivity and prayerful support in regards to their development as we do as adults. As in all areas, here we are dependent on God's power to complete a work through us. To learn patience, compassion, nurturance, and to develop and keep a vision for the life God wants for each child is a task too great for us to complete on our own. We must call on God daily to receive His power to do His will in the lives of His children. We have been given the great privilege to model God's love and truth if we remember that our adequacy is from Him alone. Our willingness to respond to His Truths in our own lives will greatly correspond to the measure of our ability to present God's Truth to others. We cannot give what we do not

What is the good news of the Bible?

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." I Corinthians 15:3-4 NIV.

The Apostle Paul wrote this scripture as he was inspired by God. He tells the Corinthian believers that the first and most important thing he wanted to share with them was the gospel message as follows:

1. Christ suffered and died on the cross for our sins, according to the scriptures.
2. He was buried in a borrowed tomb, which was then sealed and guarded.
3. He rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. Death could not hold him.

My friends, that is the gospel message in a nutshell. Very short and to the point.

In order to understand the importance of these scriptures we must dig a little deeper.

Why did Christ have to die for our sins?

In the beginning God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. They were made perfect. At that time there was no sin in the world. God placed them in the garden of Eden to live and populate the earth.

Genesis 2:16-17 "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'"

But, Satan came along and enticed Eve to eat of the fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve picked the fruit and ate it and even gave her husband Adam some to eat too.

Sin is disobedience to God. Adam and Eve became sinners, and they passed that heritage down to us. From then on everyone was born with a sin nature. We do not have to learn to be sinners it comes naturally to us.

God came to visit with Adam and Eve, but they hid from him. Why? Because they were ashamed and full of fear. Here is where the blame game got started. Adam tried to blame Eve and Eve blamed the serpent (Satan) who enticed her to eat the fruit. But, as God is all knowing He knew the whole story. He knew they had disobeyed Him.

God is love. He made mankind so that he could communicate and fellowship with them. But, God is also just. He requires that justice be done. That is why he had to shed the blood of animals in the place of shedding the blood of Adam and Eve. The animals paid the price, for the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

In the Old Testament times, God required the people to sacrifice animals daily to cover their sins. These sacrifices were looking forward to the day that God would give the ultimate sacrifice, His only Son, to die for the sin of the world. This happened in the New Testament era when the Lamb of God, which is Jesus Christ, came to this Earth to give His life and shed his blood on the cross to cover our sins.

Ephesians 1:7 "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us."

God also said in the book of Romans that the wages or payment for sin is death. Because God is just this payment must be made.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The other side of the coin is that God will give us eternal life as a free gift when we understand and accept the true gospel message.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Actually, the word sin means, "to miss the mark." (Hamartia) Can we all agree that we have all missed the mark? Or, not measured up to God's standards? Unbelievers cannot know true peace because of sin.

So, we can plainly see from the Bible that we **need** a Savior because we all are sinners. God met our need by allowing His Son to come and be a substitute our sins.

Could anyone have died for our sins? Did it have to be Jesus Christ?

Yes, it had to be Jesus Christ, because the sacrifice for our sins had to come from a perfect person, and none of us are perfect because we are born with a sin nature. He wasn't because he did not have an earthly father. Christ was born of a woman and the Holy Spirit. He was perfect without sin or imperfection. He is fully man and He is fully God. He is the only one who could qualify to die in our place.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he **gave his one and only Son**, that **whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**"

Col. 2:9 "In Him all the fullness of the Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus is God.

The resurrection of Jesus is what makes the Christian faith different. He not only died for our sins, but he **beat** death. Death could not hold Him! He rose again just as predicted in a glorified new body.

Oh friends, this is what gives us so much hope. If Jesus could die and rise again with a new body, we can too. Death doesn't have to be the end!

Some day we who know him as our Savior will meet Him face to face in Heaven and spend eternity with Him. Those who don't know Him in this personal way will spend eternity apart from Him in hell.

Ephesians 2:8&9 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.