

Bible Lessons for Children - 1

Rev David Bessant and I did a survey and at least 90% of churches that replied, agreed on the need for Training. Since then, I have been invited to conduct Teacher Training Weekends in a couple of churches and the teachers seemed to enjoy and appreciate them Hence the invitation to write this mini series of articles on **Working with Children**.

I could get all theological about the Biblical Basis of Child Evangelism but I suspect you already know why you teach children. It's not because you like children; not because the regular teacher was off sick for a couple of weeks; not because you got too old for Sunday School; and not even because the Pastor asked you to help out for a couple of weeks ten years ago. Maybe it *is* for one of those reasons but above all, the Lord Jesus himself said *Matt 18:14 It is not the will of their Father in Heaven, that any of these little ones should perish. That's the reason we teach boys and girls the Gospel.*

There are bound to be people who have been reaching children for many, many years and I'm sure they could teach me many lessons. Maybe what I share will be like 'Teaching Granny how to suck eggs' Please forgive me if it seems like that - that's not my intention. Please read with an open mind and if something is different, at least give it a try to see if it helps. If not, keep on with serving the Lord in your own, better way.

If teaching children is new to you, I hope you don't allow fear to keep you from trying. Remember, you won't get it right the first time; often in the Lord's service, we need to have a few 'practice runs' before it clicks into place. So, please be patient and 'hang in there' – it *will* become easier.

I hope you enjoy these suggestions and above all, learn something to help and improve your ministry with the boys and girls God has charged you to reach.

How to Prepare a Bible Lesson

I don't know the format of everyone's Kids Korner or Sunday School but I imagine that somewhere in the hour you have with them, there is the Bible Story. That's where I want to concentrate my suggestions.

Telling a Bible Story or Teaching a Bible Lesson

The first thing I would like every children's worker to do is stop "Telling (or "Doing") the Bible Story". Anyone can tell a story but not everyone can teach a Lesson. Instead I would like you all to get the mindset that you are Teaching a Bible Lesson. There is a big difference.

It has been said that I must have swallowed the Blarney Stone so like most people from Ireland, if someone was to give me a subject, I could start a story in minutes. But, when it comes to Bible Stories and Bible Lessons, there is a vast difference. I'm firmly convinced that even professional school teachers find teaching a Bible Lesson totally different to teaching in class.

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I hope you have noticed I have been saying Bible Lesson; so, the first exercise for you is to stop thinking and saying "Bible Story" and instead, start thinking and speaking about 'Bible Lessons.'

Now, having said that, the children still want you to tell a story; that's okay, but *in your mind*, you are going to teach a Bible Lesson. You still talk about the Bible Story – to the children – but *in your mind*, it's the Bible Lesson.

So, where do you start this Bible Lesson? Well, it is a Bible lesson so let's start there.

I suspect you have been given 'The Book' from Go Teach or Scripture Union and that gives you all the information you need – but you're not going to teach 'The Book'; you're going to Teach a Bible Lesson. So! Find out what passage 'The Book' suggests and then put the book away Crazy, I know.

But, instead of reading the Book – **Read the Bible passage a number of times**. Not once or even twice – but four, five, ten times or until you know the Bible passage from which you will Teach a Bible 'Lesson'.

When you think you know the Bible passage take a pencil and notepad and **Write out the Progression of Events**.

The Progression of Events is simply that. As each Bible passage progresses, it contains certain events. So, write down each event as it happens.

How many times have you read the Bible and think to yourself "I've read this passage a dozen times and I never saw that before" Well, it's the same with the Progression of Events – so go back and read the passage again and put in the bits you missed the first time.

Funnily enough, you will only get to know the *Progression of Events* when you *read the Bible passage a number of times*. So go back and do it again and put in the other bits you missed the second time. Go on, I dare you, try to prove me wrong – you *did* miss something didn't you!

The reason you write out the progression of events is because you cannot trust your memory when you begin to teach the children. It only takes something unexpected to happen – like a child falling off his chair or a door slamming and you are distracted. Children need to know now and will ask questions in the middle of the Lesson. By the time you've dealt with the distraction or question or whatever, you've forgotten where you were. With a Progression of Events written out, it only takes a glance and you're back on track.

Now, I know that probably you do all that and there's nothing new here, But as Jimmy Cricket says "C'mere! There's more" and I'll go on from here next time

Every blessing, Jackie