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Brought to you this month
by Jill Jenkins



The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Planning for good children's Bible learning experiences

Ten-year old Benjamin nearly sprints down the hall of the children's department at church. His parents teach in the youth area, so he arrives bright and early each Sunday. His teacher is there in his room to greet him, no matter how early he comes. Mr. John expects this early arriver and involves him in conversation and the preparation process. Benjamin loves hanging out at church with Mr. John until his friends get there for class. Without uttering a single biblical principal, Mr. John has already taught Benjamin several important things, for example: I am worthwhile; Mr. John respects me; Mr. John loves me; God loves me; and, church is a fun place to be.

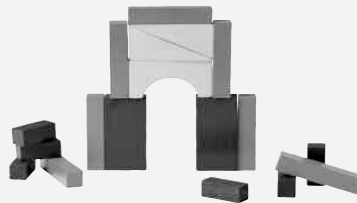
Teachers/leaders can take several simple steps to convey God's love and lessons to the children in their classrooms. Let's practice these together so that we can make our teaching time the most wonderful Bible teaching experience of a child's week.

1. Make the room ready. Learning begins when the first pupil arrives in the classroom. She's learning that someone cares enough about her to have the lights on, temperature adjusted, materials and supplies out, a teacher there to receive her. She's learning as much from the relationship with the teacher as she is from the Bible stories. Great teachers model the kind of love and concern that represents God.

2. Study the Bible, the lesson and the children. Leaders teach from their overflow of knowledge. If they are well studied on the Bible background material and the story itself, they can incorporate both, using their own words with excellent storytelling technique. Being familiar with the material allows teachers to use their Bibles to tell the story and look at the pupils as they teach, instead of reading it in their teaching books.

Children learn when they ...

- are interested in the subject or the process
- have a need
- see personal value
- have the necessary skills to learn something new
- can relate new learning to previous experiences
- are involved in and enjoy the learning process
- are influenced by a person they love and respect
- feel encouraged to learn



Plan lessons for children to ...

- know the facts
- understand the meaning
- apply bible principles in their lives/change the way they act

Resources

- Beckwith, Ivy. *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century Church*. Zondervan, 2004.
- Garland, Diana. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*. InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Prosser, McCullar, Qualls. *Building Blocks for Sunday School Growth*. Smyth & Helwys, 2002.
- Tobias, Cynthia U. *The Way They Learn*. Tyndale Press 1994.

3. Design a class based on the needs of children. Most of us require a child-based curriculum to teach effectively. A curriculum with a scope and sequence helps us know what has been taught and where we are going over the years with our teaching content. A devoted teacher prepares lessons based on the needs and learning styles of the children in the group and in coordination with the team of leaders in the classroom. Include numerous opportunities for drama, art, puzzles, maps, research, hands-on construction, discussion, games, music and creative writing.

4. Respect the pupils God has sent your way. Most adults seem to love children: respect is even more important. Show respect to children by listening to what they are really saying, allowing them to make choices, and involving them in planning activities that reflect their interests and needs.

5. Pray without ceasing. Prayer is the glue that binds together all the elements of good Bible learning. Pray for guidance in studying and planning the activities. Pray for each pupil. Pray for the Bible teaching time. Pray for lives to be changed through the testimonies of the teachers and the Bible lesson of the day. Prayer will improve you and your relationship with God, and it will have a powerful impact on your teaching effectiveness.

Try these simple things each week as you work with children. Be prepared. Plan well with others in a way that children can learn. Keep the needs of the children in mind as you plan. Respect the children and their differences. Pray continuously for this all-important hour each week. Lives will be changed, including yours. **BT**

THE RESOURCE PAGE is provided by the Congregational Life office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in partnership with *Baptists Today* and for those dedicated lay leaders working in the educational ministries of local churches. This month's page was written by Jill Jenkins, minister to children at Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Ga. Resource Page Archives are available at <http://www.thefellowship.info/Resources/Church-Resources/Baptists-Today-resource-page>.