

**Workshop Guide**  
**Focus on God's Word**  
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**“Fun Biblical Teaching That Ends At The Cross”**

3 Sections: Before, During, and After

Welcome to the wonderful world of teaching the Bible to children. Whether you teach children on Sunday mornings, Sunday nights, Wednesday nights, or any time of the week it is important to teach children the truth of the Bible. Too often teachers tell the sweet version of Bible stories without giving the meat of the scripture. How do you teach the meat of the scripture? You teach the meat of the scripture through Biblical truth, and it is okay to have fun along the way. Before we dig into how to teach children the Bible, let's talk about the “why”? Some of the why was taken from an article I wrote for “The Alabama Baptist” titled *Why is Children's Ministry Important?*

Why do children need to be taught Biblical truth?

**Pause the video here and discuss reasons why you should teach Biblical truth to children.**

There are a lot of reasons why you should teach children Biblical truth and I am going to give you three. First, children are the church just like everyone else. A common phrase I hear in the children's ministry is, “Children are the future of our church.” Yes, while children might be future Sunday School teachers, preachers, or committee leaders, children are the church right now if they are a repentant believer in Jesus Christ. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*” As you teach your class, no matter how young these believers (or soon to be believers) may be, you are teaching God's children.

Second, teaching children is biblical. Jesus said, “*Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of Heaven* (Matthew 19:14).” I am sure you have heard this verse quite often if you work in a children's ministry. You might even have it on a poster or drawn on a wall in your children's area. This verse is important in children's ministry because it shows us that even Jesus wanted the (so called) least of these to come to Him. If you think children are sometimes dirty and sticky today, they were even dirtier and stickier during Jesus' time. Some children had to fend for themselves or were taken care of by older siblings during biblical times because the parents did not have time to worry about their children's cleanliness as much as they do today. Both parents either worked in the field or took care of household chores, often with children in tow. Caring for children was much different in the first century compared to the twenty-first century. Home life was not necessarily built around the kids. In the first century, children were considered low on the totem pole, thinking they could not contribute to society, and sometimes shunned because they were dirty. Jesus, by His words and actions, changed our attitude toward children. What the world considers as weak, insignificant, and dirty – Jesus sees as strong, innocent, and beautiful.

Third, teaching children is not a demotion. I have heard this word, demotion, used in reference to teaching children. Many, if not most, of Christ's followers today began to have a spiritual journey by the time they are 12. From the ages of 4-12 is when children's brains are like sponges, taking everything in and rinsing out what they don't understand and what is not important to them. I believe whether you are teaching children, youth, or adults, all are important. Every age should be taught the meat of the Scripture, while also understanding and making application to the age range in which you are teaching. Okay, I may be a little biased, but if you are teaching children - Jesus tells us that you are answering the call for one of the most important assignments in His Kingdom.

I know it is so easy to give them goldfish and put in a movie; for some events maybe that is okay. We should strive to do better for a traditional weekly Bible study time. I know that is why you are here. You might be a new teacher or a vetted one, and I hope you are able to take something from this gathering today.

In this model you will see three different sections: The 1<sup>st</sup> is before Bible study, 2<sup>nd</sup> during Bible study, and 3<sup>rd</sup> after Bible study. Before we dive into the "before Bible Study" portion, I want to thank you for teaching children the Bible. I know the sacrifices you are making each week through time and perhaps financially as well. I know that since you are teaching children you are missing time you could be learning beside adults your own age. Thank you for your sacrifice.

Why is this hour you prepare for so important? Grab a piece of paper, a pencil, and four different colored markers for each teacher. Draw 168 circles on your piece of paper.

**Pause here until everyone has drawn their circles.**

Each circle represents an hour in each child's week. Grab one of your colors and color in 40 circles. These 40 circles represent how much school each child attends each week. Now grab another color and color in 70 circles. These circles represent how much sleep children get each week. Last grab one more color and color in the remainder 58 circles. These 58 circles represent the time children spend with their parents each week. Grab your fourth color and draw over one of the parents' circles to represent church.

If the parents choose to bring their children to church, you have 1, 2, 3, and maybe 4 hours to teach your students about God's love for them. The average Christian spends one hour a week at church. ***"Make the hour you have with them count!"***

Let's talk about how to make the one hour count by talking about the **"before"**. Before your Sunday School class, discipleship group, or Wednesday night Bible study there are three steps to focus on: intentional preparation, read your Bible story three times, and age awareness.

First, how can you have **intentional preparation** before your Bible study? Pray, truly study, write out your schedule, and listen to podcast or sermons that go along with your lesson. You can make this study a part of your quiet time. Doing this will make your heart excited to share what you have studied with your students. Also, find a commentary that allows you to dig a

little bit deeper into God's Word. You do not have to go far into your pocketbook to buy a commentary that is helpful. I suggest Wiersbe's Old Testament and New Testament Commentary.

**Pause the video now and talk discuss how you can have intentional preparation with your group.**

Second, **read your Bible story three times before Sunday**. You might be familiar with the account you are reading, but this helps you better understand the timeline of events when interacting with children. As you know, children quickly interrupt, take bathroom breaks, or run down a rabbit hole, but if you know your story well enough, you will easily jump right back into the Bible story.

Third, have **"age awareness"** when teaching your students scripture. Be aware of what your students can Biblically understand at their age level. This does not take away from children understanding a little bit more, because some absolutely can, but you still need to know what to focus on. If you have age awareness, this allows your students to concentrate on the big points they can grasp. Before we discuss age awareness further, get into your teaching age groups and write down the milestones your age group is going through and the Biblical truths you think they can grasp. Here are the age groups: young preschoolers (bed babies - 1 year olds), middle preschoolers (2 year olds - 3 year olds), older preschoolers (4 year olds - 5 year olds), young grade schoolers (K - 2<sup>nd</sup> graders), and grade schoolers (3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders).

**Pause here and use about 5-7 minutes to discuss the age group you teach with your group. If you have small groups, then feel free to combine and discuss each age group.**

Each age group is significant, and they are all going through different milestones; spiritually, mentally, and physically.

Here are some examples of what each age can grasp: (This is according to the resource in Lifeway – Ages and Stages. If you are teaching this lesson, use the poster Lifeway has to display the age levels or use the handout they have online.)

- What can children of different ages learn about Jesus?
  - Younger Preschoolers – Jesus loves me.
  - Middle Preschoolers – Jesus loves people.
  - Older Preschoolers – People can obey Jesus because they love Him.
  - Younger Kids – People who love Jesus want to obey Him.
  - Middle Kids – People can obey Jesus in response to His love.

Hitting on these points will allow children to comprehend what is going on in Bible study. This also allows children to not be confused. As children learn these different truths, they can build on the truths they have learned in previous years.

**Use these resources to help:**

<https://www.rsd.k12.pa.us/Downloads/Development Chart for Booklet.pdf>

<https://vbs.lifeway.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/AgesStagesBooklet.pdf>

Now that we have gone over what to do before Bible study, let's discuss what you can **"use" during Bible study.**

The first point to use during Bible study is your ***Bible***. This seems silly to bring up but too often we say I know the story so I will just paraphrase, or it is too hard to have children find the passage, so I won't do that either. Yes, younger groups will not necessarily open their Bibles, but they will notice that you do. If children don't see you, their church teacher, open their Bibles then how do we expect them to open their Bible at home. This does not mean that you have to read all 36 verses that explain your Bible story, but you can paraphrase some parts and say, "oh wow let's say what Jesus said." ***Make reading the Bible the most exciting part and central part of your Bible study.*** You can go to a "reading rug", bring your chairs to a circle, or even have the kids read the scripture themselves.

**Pause here and discuss fun ways you can make the Bible reading time the most exciting time in you Sunday School class.**

Here are some fun ways to make reading your Bible fun...

1. You can go to a "reading rug".
2. Bring your chairs to a circle.
3. Have the kids read the scripture themselves if you have older children.
4. Go outside to read.

Also, as you study the Bible with the children, discuss these questions each week to further their understanding of the Bible Questions: Who? What audience? The timeline? The purpose?

1. Who wrote the book you are studying?
2. Who was the writer writing to?
3. Where does this story fit into the timeline of the Bible?
4. What is the purpose of the book?

Answering these questions allows children to see the full picture of the Bible. This also allows children to see that the Bible is one big story that points to Jesus.

The second point to use during Bible study is ***Bible skills***. Help your students understand the books of the Bible, memory verses, and even key passages. If you have Bible Drills, Skills, and Thrills at your church, then this time in Sunday School or Wednesday night will just expound on what they are already learning. Your Bible skills time can reemphasize what your lesson is. You can have a memory verse for the day or month and have fun memory games to go along with it. For the books of the Bible, you can have a fun song that you go over each week. I meet a lot of adults that cannot find certain books of the Bible, and while this does not define if you're a Christian by any means, it would help them as they study God's Word. Most people are intimidated when they approach the Bible and that is because they don't know how to navigate it. Have a poster in your room that has the books of the Bible on them and have an arrow where your lesson is for the day. You can even have each child come up and read that book. Here are some resources to help you with Bible skills in your classroom: [www.kidzlinkal.org](http://www.kidzlinkal.org), follow

Families\_In\_The\_Word on Instagram, and follow Alabama Bible Drill on Facebook. You will find fun, easy, and Biblical ways to plug in Bible skills into your Sunday School class.

**Pause here and discuss fun ways you already apply Bible skills into your class and then discuss ways you can plug it in.**

The third point to use during Bible study is your *five senses*. This point is where you can really bring your creativity into the classroom. Like I said earlier it is okay to have fun in Bible study, and sometimes the kids remember the passage a little bit further by getting their hands dirty, smelling something, taking a bite of food, etc. Let's look at an example: (If you are teaching this model, you can have the adults participate in this activity.) Here is a fun example...If you are studying the book of Jonah, here are ways you can use your five senses.

1. **Hearing:** At the beginning of class have your students guess these sounds: fish in the water, a boat in the water, casting lots, and a man jumping in the water. See if they can guess the Bible study from these sounds.
2. **Touch:** Place sardines in a brown paper sack. Have each child place their hand in the bag to guess what it is. Have them write down what they think is in the brown paper sack.
3. **Smell:** Once they have guessed, have them smell the sardines. Ewww gross! Jonah smelled worse than that when the big fish threw him up on the shore.
4. **Sight:** Show each child the scripture and a picture of the story. Sometimes a short 5-7 minute video allows children to hear from someone else and helps the Biblical truth you are teaching click.
5. **Taste:** Have snack craft materials ready for your children to enjoy. Grab a banana for the big fish, raisins for the eyes, wafers for the fin and tail, and a teddy graham to place inside the big fish's mouth as Jonah. Do this with your students to remember your story.



Obviously, you can't use all five senses in each Bible study, but you can aim to use two or three. Children learn in different ways, some children learn by sitting and listening, others learn through an activity, game, or repetition. Attempting to use your five senses allows those who learn in a different way to grasp what you are teaching them.

The fourth point to use during Bible study is *recap*. Kids often learn through repetition. After you have your prime Bible reading and lesson time, have recap questions and games. Here are some fun examples:

First example, play hot potato. Whenever the music stops and the ball lands on someone have that person answer a review question from your lesson. If they answer correctly let them play and stop the music for the next round. Second example, make a board game on a poster board with squares on it that have a variety of generic questions. Here are some sample questions: What was your memory verse? Who were the main characters in your lesson? Where was Jesus in our story? What book of the Bible was our story in? Third example, hide questions around the room and have each child find them and answer the questions. See who can do this task the quickest. These are fun easy recap games you can use and reuse.

The fifth point to use during Bible study is *Jesus*. Always, always, always, talk about Jesus and end at the cross. I understand that some Bible stories might be difficult to find a Christ connection, but Jesus is always there. There is a constant theme in the Bible: creation - fall - redemption - restoration. You will always see these four attributes together in every Bible story. If you struggle with this point, find a Jesus study Bible to help guide you.

Here is a familiar story, Saul and his attempt to kill David, let's see how it connects to Jesus.

Let's read 1 Samuel 19: 23-24.

Saul realized that the people loved David more than him. This made him very angry and jealous. Saul clearly announced his plans to kill David even though David was an innocent man. Saul wanted to kill David because David was a threat to Saul's power and control.

Do you know who else was a threat to powerful people? Jesus was. David's story happened over 900 years before Jesus was born but God still had Jesus in the picture. David was an innocent man in this story. Of course he still sinned, he did nothing wrong to King Saul who wanted to kill him. Jesus was completely innocent, he did not sin at all, but the religious leaders during his time wanted to kill Jesus. The religious leaders brought Jesus in front of the people and even the governor Pontius Pilate and they eventually killed the innocent man – Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He bore all our sins so that one day we can live for Him and spend eternity in Heaven – if we repent of our sins, believe Jesus is God's Son, and confess our faith daily.

We are not innocent; we are sinful people who deserve to spend eternity away from God. God loves us so much that he is willing, and he has the power, to forgive our sins no matter how bad they are.

Always, always, always end at the cross!

(We will discuss ways to share the Gospel and end at the cross near the end of our time together.)

This brings us to the third section of how to have fun Biblical teaching that ends at the cross and what happens **after** Sunday School.

After Sunday School **hand the parents a recap**. The first detail to focus on after Sunday School is to give something to parents that recaps the Bible study lesson. Some parents have no idea how to disciple their child, yet it is their job to be their spiritual guide, outside of the Holy Spirit of course. Your curriculum might have a card or an extra worksheet. Use this item to give to the parents so the parents can ask their children questions. You can even provide the questions

and ask the parents to see if their children remember the lesson. This allows parents to further their child's growth in Biblical study while discipling them. An activity sheet with a few questions can go a long way. You can even e-mail the parents before your next meeting with the answers to the questions.

To really get the parents involved you can ask the kids to bring the completed activity sheet and/or the answered questions back for a treat next week. This might get the children excited to come back to church too!

**Pause here to discuss with your group how you can hand the parents a recap. If you already do this, then share your thoughts.**

After Sunday School try to **contact the parents**. Technology makes it quick and easy to contact people. You can send a personalized text, e-mail, call, or Facebook message. Let the parents know you are happy their child is in your class. You can even add a personal touch by mentioning their child's love of baseball or gymnastics. Don't you feel accepted and loved when you get a card, text, or e-mail from someone? Use Sunday School in the same way. In a book called "Flip the Script" it discusses how we need to change the way we handle children's and preschool ministry. Since COVID some people are scared or unsure of church. We need to make sure they feel welcomed by extending love and compassion. People are overwhelmed with the white noise of the world, and we need to be a bright shining light they gravitate towards, pointing to Jesus in the process.

If you are a Bible study teacher or a children's and preschool minister, I would like to share a fun method to reach out to the parents and kids in your class. Keep a pencil pouch in your classroom with postcards that say, "We miss you!" or "We are happy you joined us!". Each week towards the end of your time together look at your roster and see who is missing. Write a little postcard letting that child know you missed them. Have each student in your class sign the postcard if they are old enough to write. This allows the students in your class to know that they are a part of the group and that when they are gone, they are missed too. If you have a new student in your class, then write a note to them while they are not looking and add a personal note.

**Pause here and discuss how you can contact the parents regularly.**

Now that we have discussed fun ways to have Biblical teaching, let's discuss fun ways to share the Gospel. There are a lot of tools out there that can help you share the Gospel with your students. Two keys to help the students in your room as you share the Gospel and end at the cross: repetition and place it in their hands.

First, let's unfold repetition as we examine sharing the Gospel with students and ending at the cross. While you always talk about Jesus, you need to focus on the fact that Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins. Salvation is a gift God has given us and we can either reject it or accept it. How do you accept this gift of salvation? First, admit that you are a sinner and ask for forgiveness of your sins. Second, believe that Jesus is God's Son - He is the only way to Heaven. Third, Confess your faith in Jesus as your Savior and your Lord *daily*. Once you become a

Christian you live your life for the Lord every day and not for yourself or anyone else. If you repeat this to your children every time you meet, then one day it might click.

Second, how can you place the Gospel and the truth of the cross in your students' hands? Use fun Gospel sharing tools to share with your students. Show them and then see if they want to repeat what you have said. Here are some examples. Find fun tools at [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com) or [letthelittlechildrencome.com](http://letthelittlechildrencome.com). You can change it up each week or you can find 6 to 12 methods to share the Gospels and do the same one for an entire month. This will allow repetition and you can take steps to help with consistency. On the first Sunday of the month, you can demonstrate the Gospel tool. On the second Sunday of the month you can allow one child to demonstrate the Gospel tool. On the third Sunday of the month, you can have children partner up and practice using the Gospel tool. On the fourth Sunday of the month, you can have the children practice sharing the Gospel tool with their parents and maybe take it home. This way children have repetition, and they are having a hands-on experience in sharing the Gospel. You are helping grow evangelists when you take this extra step, way to go! Here are some Gospel tools I like to use. If you have them in front of you, then practice them with the people at your table.

- Evangacube
- Wordless book
- Wordless Bracelet
- Bracelets that share the Gospel
- Gospel Plane
- Gospel Tracts
- Gospel Bag

This brings our time together to a close. As you teach children God's word know that what you are doing does not fall on deaf ears. These children need to hear from you, and you are exactly where you need to be! Keep up the great work and don't forget to always, always talk about Jesus and end at the cross.

**Before:**

1. Intentional preparation.
2. Read your Bible story three times before Sunday.
3. Age Awareness.

**During:**

4. Use your Bible.
  - a. Have kids use their Bible.
  - b. Read your Bible in front of the kids.
5. Use Bible skills.
6. Use your five senses.
7. Always, always, always, always talk about Jesus and end at the cross – share the Gospel.
8. Recap – ask serious questions.



Show three examples: one from the Old Testament, one from the Gospels, and one from the letters.

**After:**

9. Give them something that recaps their Bible study.
10. Contact the parents in some way.
  - a. Let them know you are praying for them and that you care.
  - b. Facebook message.
  - c. Text.
  - d. Write a letter.
  - e. Call.
  - f. E-mail.