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INTRODUCTION

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children”
(Hosea 4:6).*

FOCUS: The gospel must be carried to people all over the world—in all age groups. If this church is going to grow and progress, we must pass our faith to the next generation.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The prophet Hosea spoke to the kingdom of Israel during their last years. His words are also prophetic to us.

Are we not God’s people—called to be His children (I Peter 2:9)? We can be destroyed if we do not retain the knowledge and love of God’s Word in our hearts. What does God say He will do to those who reject and forget His law?

Two things:

1. He will reject them as spiritual leaders.
2. He will forget their children.

What a sad state to be in! If we do not diligently keep God’s Word and abide by it, this will happen to us. Deuteronomy 4:9 speaks of this.

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons.”

The book of Deuteronomy is God’s instructions, through Moses, on how the children of Israel (His chosen people) were to live. Much emphasis is placed on the fathers passing the truth to their children. In this manner, the truth would never die. If only one man failed to be the type of father God intended for him to be, if he did not pass his love for truth along to his children, then the chain would be broken.

How sad to learn that this happened in the life of Moses. He did not see the importance of circumcision and failed to keep the sign of the covenant in his firstborn son (Exodus 4:20-26). This same son (Gershom—Exodus 2:22) did not teach truth and a love for the things of God to his son, who became a priest of idols. (See Judges 17-18, especially 18:30.) Think about it! Moses led a nation out of slavery, saw the Red Sea part,

received the Ten Commandments from the finger of God, and witnessed many mighty miracles. But, he did not pass his faith along to his children.

The man who took Moses’ place of leadership fell into this same trap. We are not told a lot about Joshua’s family. We only know the bold statement he made when faced with a decision.

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

What a pity that Joshua had not trained his children to feel the same way. How do we know that he failed to do this? Read Judges 2:10.

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.”

Joshua and his generation failed to follow God’s command. When they died, their children did not know the Lord. They did not even know all that God had done for Israel. What a tragedy!

It does not matter how dynamic your walk with God or how powerful your ministry. If you do not train your children to love the Lord, they will be lost (Ephesians 6:4; Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:2-9).

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

*“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”
(II Timothy 3:15).*

The New Testament gives us a picture of the successful training of a child. Timothy, whose father was Greek, was trained by his mother and grandmother to love God. He became the man sent by the apostle Paul to continue the work of God in many newly established churches. What a wonderful opportunity and blessing. What a wise mother and grandmother. Even though the head of the home did not serve God, this mother took literally the scripture that admonished her to train her child in the ways of the Lord. She began with a love for and knowledge of God’s Word. That is where we all begin.

Jesus rebuked the disciples when they tried to send the children away. Their attitude implied that children were not important, and a waste of His valuable teaching time (Matthew 19:13-15). Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost lets us know that he “got the message” of Jesus’

correction. While quoting Joel 2:28, he mentioned "your sons and your daughters". Again, in Acts 2:39, he explains the promise was "to you and to your children". Children were important to the early church, and they should be important to the church today.

Why then would churches not count children in their attendance reports? Is each child not a soul that will live forever? Children can be molded and shaped into God's design. Their lives are before them. What potential. Why are they not important in our eyes?

There is a story told of one famous preacher who reported the results of his meeting as 3 ½ souls. When asked if that was three adults and one child, he replied, "No, that was three children and one adult. The children have their whole lives before them, the adult has already lived half of his."

Is the biggest effort spent on lives already half spent? How much care is taken with those whose entire life stretches in front of them? God open our eyes!

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL. . . BUT UNREACHED!

Around the world, multitudes of children need the Lord. They need to know how much God loves them. Statistics show us that *45% of the ENTIRE POPULATION of Africa is under the age of 15!* This means that in one entire continent, children make up almost half of the population. This statistic is staggering.

What are we doing to reach their souls? How are we ministering to their needs? Are we only concerned with their secular schooling? Are we only concerned with their ability to raise money so they can help support us in our old age? What about their future? Will they train their children in the ways and love of God?

This is a serious problem. Parents do everything in their power to send their children abroad, even to the point of lying about their parentage. Small children, some under the age of ten, are sent overseas to live with a sister, brother, aunt or uncle. Few ever see their mother and father again. No thought is taken about who will train them in spiritual things. What about their souls? The Bible is clear about who is responsible for the training of children.

"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Parents will answer to God for how they train their children. Each person will spend eternity

somewhere-in eternal bliss or eternal torment. Training could make the difference.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Children watch their parents, and usually follow in their footsteps (Proverbs 20:7). They need to know why their parents follow certain statutes and laws. As parents, we must give them answers (I Peter 3:15; Deuteronomy 6:17-25).

We have already been told of our responsibility as parents to our children. As spiritual watchmen, what are we (pastors and church leaders) doing to reach our children? Do we have services designed to meet their needs? Are they encouraged to obey the gospel? Do we live a life of holiness and love before them? Just how important are our children to us? The answer to these questions could change our ministries in many ways.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

How can we make a difference in the lives of our children? How do we pass the faith along? How can we reach this large portion of our world? God has never given us an impossible task (Philippians 4:13). We need to remember His promises and begin now to work toward the solution of this great need. Our children must be reached!

HOW DOES SUNDAY SCHOOL HELP?

One simple method that the church can use to reach, evangelize, teach, and train its children and members of all ages is Sunday school.

What is Sunday school?

- A school that meets on Sunday--the church's school.
- A school that uses the Bible as its textbook.
- A religious training/teaching program for adults and children.

This special type of teaching/training began in England in 1780 out of a need to train children in reading, arithmetic, and the Bible. In those days, children were not sent to school. It was the task of each family to decide how much education their children received. Most children never had any training in the Bible. Then, one man and his wife began training children in their home. This method of reaching children spread all over England, and eventually around the world. It has been proven that as the Sunday school grows, the church grows. Why?

- Sunday school reaches the people of your community.
- Sunday school teaches people the Bible.

LESSON 1

What IS Christian Education?

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”

(II Timothy 2:2).

FOCUS: The whole purpose of the church is to fulfill the great commission and pass the faith along to those who come behind us. If we do not do this, we have missed the greatest goal of all.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

In today's busy society, it is sometimes difficult to sift through all the unimportant things that we do. We rush here and there, trying our best to please our boss, our fellow men, and ourselves. The great commission, given by our Lord just before He went to heaven, should be the focal point of our lives for it is the key to happiness and fulfillment. Showing and teaching others who Jesus really is, by the way we live, talk and act, should be our primary goal, even on our jobs. So, what exactly does the great commission say? What does it have to do with Christian education?

In Matthew we read:

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

In verse 19, the word “teach” literally means “make disciples.” Jesus not only gave His followers a promise, He told them how they could continue in the faith—even after He was gone.

John 8:31-32 gives us this answer:

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

When we continue in God's Word, we learn more about Him. In His Word we find the “food for our souls” that will help us “. . . grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18).

As we grow in our knowledge of God and His ways, it becomes easier to recognize the lies of the devil. As we continue in God's Word, we become

more like Him. The more we read and study, the more we understand God's plan for our lives. God's love and redemption become clearer with every lesson we learn, and it becomes easier to trust Him with our daily lives.

How can we do this if we do not understand His Word? Who is responsible to help us know, love, and understand the words of Christ?

The Apostle Peter, (the one with the keys to God's kingdom), spoke on the Day of Pentecost, when the first church was born. Peter was obeying that “great commission” given by Jesus to “teach all nations” just before He ascended into heaven. The audience was made of representatives from all over the known world, and their question was: “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39).

Notice that Peter was not just talking to those present. He was talking to future generations, in the same manner that Moses spoke to the children of Israel when God first called them and made them a peculiar people. Peter was preaching to our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, our great grandchildren, and their descendants after them. It was meant to be an unbroken chain of teaching and sharing Jesus with every family member and generation.

This is Christian education. It means a never-ending chain of sharing God's Word, His truth, and a love for His ways with our families—our children and their children. When we are dead, they will continue to teach their children, and so on. Moses said it like this:

“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth

covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 6:20-25; 7:9).

Moses, and the children of Israel, did not have the Bible, or storybooks, or encyclopedias to preserve their history. It was the job of each family to share it with their children. It was also the job of the priest to be sure that each family knew and remembered the laws. Sons were taught this in school, and every household had things around them that were reminders of what God had done for His people. But somebody had to teach.

So what does this have to do with the church? How are we responsible for teaching God's Word to those who come under our leadership? What IS Christian education? It is simply "training/teaching believers of the gospel in the ways of the Lord."

A good analogy of "Christian education" is found in the way we raise our children. When they are newborn, they depend on us for every need. We feed, clothe, clean, and nurture them. As they get older, they take on certain tasks for themselves, such as eating, washing, and being more careful about their safety. Only when they are nearly grown do our children provide for themselves.

So it is in our Christian lives. As newborns in Christ, our pastor and church family provide everything for us. They take care of us completely—providing spiritual food, protection, and nourishment. But, as we grow, we learn how to feed ourselves from God's Word, and also how to avoid places that will harm us spiritually. We even learn how to fight off the attacks of the enemy. However, only mature, properly trained Christians are able to produce and nurture newborns in Christ. Therefore, the church must make "Christian education" a priority.

The Full Life Study Bible gives a clear definition of what teaching is, as applied to the church: "TEACHING is the God-given desire, ability, and power to examine and study God's Word, and to clarify, expound, defend, and proclaim its truth in such a way that others grow in grace and godliness."

Why is it necessary for us to be well educated in the knowledge and ways of the Bible? The *Full Life Study Bible* lists the following reasons in the article "Bible Training for Christians" (p. 1920).

1) To know the gospel of Christ and His righteous standards (II Timothy 3:15), to guard them from false teachings (II Timothy 1:14), and to share them with others (I Timothy 4:6, 11).

2) To feel the need for "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

3) To be able to defend our faith against false teachings (Galatians 1:9).

4) To lead Christians into continual growth in character by teaching "doctrine according to godliness" (I Timothy 6:3-5).

5) To strengthen and bring to maturity fellow Christians who will join in the task of showing Christ to this godless society (Ephesians 4:11-16).

6) To bring students of the Bible into a deeper understanding and experience in God's kingdom and the fight against the power of Satan (Ephesians 6:10-18).

7) To convince Christ's followers of the necessity of evangelizing the lost and preaching this great gospel to every nation by the power of the Holy Ghost (Mark 16:15-20).

8) To help followers of Jesus know His love and fellowship in a deeper way through the working of the Spirit (Romans 8:13-14).

9) To equip students not only to know, but to be and do what the Bible says. The truths of the Bible are issues of life and death, and must be acted on by both the teacher and the student (James 2:17).

10) To emphasize true righteousness (II Timothy 2:19).

11) To always be able to explain (to those who want to know) why we have hope (I Peter 3:15).

Jesus brought it down to one simple command, when He spoke to the apostle Peter:

". . . Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved Him? In the Greek, at least two different types of "love" are referred to in this scene. The first one was an intelligent and purposeful love, of the mind and will. It was a determination to love.

LESSON 2

Can God Trust You With The Future?

*“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him”
(Genesis 18:19).*

FOCUS: When God called Abraham, He expected him to lead his household in the ways of the Lord. His children were of utmost importance—even though it was many years after God’s first call of Abraham before Isaac was born. God knew Abraham well enough that He could trust him to do this important task. What does God know about you?

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and Sarah was ninety when the three visitors of Genesis 18 appeared at the tent door. They asked for Sarah (who was hiding) and told Abraham that the time had come for the promise of a son to be fulfilled. Sarah laughed. She thought that it was impossible to produce a child at her age, but *nothing* is too hard for God.

The visitors did not come just to have Sarah laugh at them. They were on another mission entirely. They had come to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Should Abraham be told of their intentions? Could he handle it? In answer to these questions, the Lord said He could trust Abraham. And why could He trust Abraham? Genesis 18:18-19 answers this:

- Abraham was going to become a great and mighty nation.
- All the people of the earth were going to be blessed by this nation.
- God knew Abraham would command his children and his household so they would not only know, but keep the ways of the LORD.
- God knew Abraham’s children would do justice and judgment. (See Genesis 18:19.)

Why was it so important that God know these things about Abraham? The nation that he was going to father would be different from any race, tribe or group of people on the earth. They would

eat differently, dress differently, worship differently, marry for different reasons, and follow a totally different code of ethics. All of this would be possible *only* if they were taught and trained to follow the ways of the Lord!

Are we any different? Are we not a chosen generation? Did God not call us His “royal priesthood”? Have we not become “a holy nation”? Are we not branded as “a peculiar people”? (I Peter 2:9) All of this is for what reason? That we should show the world the glory of God—the one who has brought us out of the darkness of sin into His marvelous light. We cannot show the world Jesus unless we follow His ways. Only God’s Word will show us that path. Someone must teach us what is found in its pages.

God will reveal His secrets to a people that He can trust to command their children in His ways. We will become a great and mighty church only if we teach our children the ways of the Lord.

The Scriptures tell us of another man who was not trustworthy with God’s plan. Hezekiah was a king of Judah. His father had been a godless man who had even erected idols in Solomon's Temple. Hezekiah did not learn of God from his home, but he knew how his people were supposed to live. When his father died and he became king, he restored the Temple to its rightful place of importance, and removed the idols that his father had allowed. He did many good things for Judah, and even led them to defeat some of their major enemies.

But then God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell Hezekiah that he was about to die. Instead of accepting God’s will, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, reminded God of all the good things he had done, and asked for more time. God granted his request and gave him fifteen more years of life. (Read II Kings 20:1-11.)

During this extra fifteen years his son was born. It was also during this time that Hezekiah revealed his true character.

A distant king sent one of his sons to greet Hezekiah and inquire of his health. Hezekiah decided to show off his possessions, the good things stored up by his ancestors, and what he had accomplished while he had been king. He revealed all the secrets of his kingdom. (Read II Kings 20:12-15.)

When the prophet returned to rebuke him, Hezekiah was not even sorry. He was not worried about anything, because the trouble that the prophet foretold was to come after his death. He did not care that his descendants would be carried

away into captivity. He was not concerned that his family would be destroyed. He was not a bit dismayed that the king after him would lead the people into terrible acts of idolatry and wickedness. That king would be his son—a boy by the name of Manasseh, who was just twelve years old at the time he began to rule Judah. This new king ruled for fifty-five years, much longer than Hezekiah himself. Let's see what the Scripture says happened:

"And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?" (II Kings 20:16-19).

Hezekiah could not be trusted with children, as he was not a bit worried about training them in the ways of the Lord. Even after this prophecy, he did not attempt to lead his son to do right. What a sad story!

Another example in the Scripture shows a man who was determined to make the path of God clear to his children and their children! His name was Jonathan. He was the son of Israel's first king. Jonathan had every reason (according to human understanding) to hate David. After all, was not David the one who was taking the kingdom away from his family? David had been anointed as king, and the royal line had been removed from Jonathan's family forever. But Jonathan did not blame David. He knew that God was in control, and so he did everything he could to make provision for his children and those after him.

Jonathan became David's best friend, one that he made a special covenant with (I Samuel 18:1,3). He loved David, and went so far as to give to David the symbols of his own royalty—his robe, his sword, his bow, and his girdle (I Samuel 18:4). He gave these things to the man who would become king in his place.

When Saul became so jealous that David was forced to run for his life, Jonathan was the one who helped him escape. Again, their covenant was renewed, and included their children (I Samuel 20:42). Jonathan was preparing for his children's future.

After Jonathan's death, when David had peacefully taken over the throne of Israel, David remembered his friend and asked about his

descendants. Sure enough, Jonathan had a son who was still alive. His name was Mephibosheth. He had been crippled trying to escape after his father's death in battle. He had been in hiding for many years, but when David sent for him, he came at once.

What did Mephibosheth find? He found a man who still loved his father and remembered their covenant. He found a friend who wanted to take care of him for the rest of his life. He found out that his father had provided well for him by his love and friendship with the future king. He discovered that his father was a man God could trust. (Read II Samuel 9:1-13.)

What are we doing with the "future" that God has placed in our hands? As families, we have a job to do. But the church of God has the greatest task! We must take care of our future. We must be careful to provide well for those who follow in our footsteps—our children.

CONCLUSION

This great United Pentecostal Church has a rich history of pioneers who fought and suffered so that we could know God in His fullness. We have a rich heritage to guard. If we do not take care of our future, we will die. The only way this church can continue is if we guard our future, and make sure that those who follow us have an understanding of the past and realize the responsibility of the future.

Do you see? This is a never-ending cycle. We are the present. But it will not be many years before we are history. And what we call the "future" will be the "present." We must train our children to walk in the ways of the Lord, and to love His Word. Will we be like Abraham and Jonathan, or will we care only for the things of our lifetime like Hezekiah?

Can God Trust Us With the Future?

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. How was God trusting Abraham with the future in our key verse? _____

2. Which king of Judah was an example of a man who could not be trusted with the future?

LESSON 3

The Why of Christian Education

“Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it” (Deuteronomy 31:12-13).

“And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34).

FOCUS: Throughout the Bible, the purpose of Christian education is two-fold:

- KNOWING
- DOING

Teaching is the natural result of God's love.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

God has always had a plan! He has always made provision for His special people to understand that plan (as much as it is possible for man to understand God). He operates something like a good teacher (which He surely is). “Here are the rules, and here is what happens if you obey these rules. If you do not, this is the punishment.”

In the Old Testament, teaching was for the purpose of acquainting God's chosen, special people with His laws. Their obedience to these laws meant that they would remain special and chosen—different from all the other peoples of the world. This would bring glory and honour to God who had called them apart from other nations.

Without obedience to God's law, the nation of Israel was a failure. The law had to be clearly understood, but at the same time, they needed to know where they got it. God and not man had given them the instructions they were to live by. This information was for their daily lives. First, they had to *know*, and then they had to *do*. In fact, for the nation of Israel, action was the sign that they knew.

Since there was no such thing as “school” or “church” in the Old Testament, children were

taught at home. The father, as the leader, was responsible for this instruction. It was to be diligent, because children had to understand that these instructions were not just for them to *know*, but they were meant to *do*. Daily, they were to live by the things they learned in the school of the home.

In our key verse (v. 13) the word “learn” meant putting the things they had learned into practice in their lives. This was the purpose for all teaching. If they had “learned” to fear the Lord, they would “obey” His commands. When they had a change of heart, they made a change in their behavior. Learning God's law would actually control their decisions and actions.

By the time Jesus was born, this type of teaching and practice of God's law had broken down. Fathers no longer spent time training their children in the ways of God. The Pharisees were fanatical in following the law, but they missed the whole purpose of being a separated, blessed people.

Most of Jesus' teachings were a response to this mistake. He came to fulfill the law, and wanted us to understand how important and valuable it was in the kingdom of God. He even taught that those who practice and teach God's laws will be great in His kingdom. When we teach, we need to teach with the goal of getting our students to obey and live according to those teachings.

This idea of *knowing* and *doing* is repeated in the New Testament with the teachings of Jesus: “*If ye love me, keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). “*But he said, Yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it*” (Luke 11:28). James added his version of this with his familiar passage: “*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*” (James 2:17).

Jesus always taught lessons that could be used in the lives of the people He was trying to help. His whole purpose for teaching them was so that they would have a good life—a more abundant life.

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

The laws of God are not just a list of rules to *know*, they are a list of life principles to *do*. When we *do* them, our lives are enriched, blessed, and we have peace of mind and heart. Helping others to know God and to follow His will for their lives is one of the most compassionate ministries of the church. Jesus spent most of His ministry teaching others about this “abundant life.”

When it is understood and used properly,

LESSON 4

Reaching Through Teaching

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”

(Colossians 1:28).

FOCUS: Our goal is that we (along with our children) may see Jesus with joy. We are all striving to be perfected in Him, but this only comes through learning His Word and following His ways.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

From Genesis to Revelation, God’s Word is used for two purposes:

- Reaching souls
- Teaching them to obey His laws

It involves first *knowing*, and then *doing*. This process is never finished, and should continue until the day we are called to be with Jesus.

As a never-ending process, teaching involves much prayer, study, and hard work. It is not something you simply learn in your head, then stand before a group of people and do. It must be learned with the heart and lived in the life. In this journey called “life,” God’s Word is the guidebook and road map. Without it, we will fall into a great pit. Even when we have it (and most people in our world do have God’s Word in some form or translation), if we do not use it, we will still fall into the pit. First we *know*, and then we *do*.

The part of the “reaching” process (after *knowing* and *doing*) that makes it happen is “understanding” or “comprehension.” Many times, this part is forgotten or ignored. Many teachers feel that if their students can repeat what they have heard, they must surely know the lesson. Does your baby understand every word he repeats behind you? When he says “paper” for the first time, does that mean he knows how to use paper? No. When he uses “paper” in the bathroom, he has still not understood its use in the classroom. And even after using paper to write, he will learn about its use as a decoration for wrapping gifts. He has many things to learn about “paper,” and just speaking the word does not mean that he understands them all.

The same is true of those who can quote many scriptures. It takes time to learn how to apply those words to your life. Even after using one scripture for a long time, you may discover

another way it can touch you. God’s Word is never changing, but always new and helpful, no matter what your circumstance or situation.

“Reaching Through Teaching” is a ministry of the church that works hard to be sure those who are taught God’s Word apply it to their lives. This is done through several different means.

On the NATIONAL LEVEL

1. The National Board and ministerial body (pastors of the church in any nation) meet regularly to learn and grow in the ways of God. The leadership of any organization needs special training, on a consistent basis, to keep them growing and moving forward.

2. The Bible school in any nation is vital to the process of *knowing* God’s Word. If the men and women who are being trained in the ministry do not understand what God’s Word says, and if they do not live it every day, then the church is not alive and will never grow. The main focus of the Bible school in any nation is to pass the knowledge of God’s Word on to the people they are teaching.

3. Portable Bible Schools are another way that the entire church in any nation can be used of God to help new converts in this *knowing* process. At the same time, members are encouraged to reach out to their communities (get involved with the *doing*). With these schools, men go to an area and carry concentrated training in the practices of the first church (the Book of Acts church) to get all of God’s church involved in the work of evangelism. After all, that is what happened when the “church” began.

4. The Sunday school department of any church body is vitally important to the *knowing* process. In Sunday school every member of the assembly can be taught what God’s Word has to say about his particular needs. This means that even though a family may be experiencing a problem, the different age groups and roles in the family will need different solutions/directions. Sunday school is the place where this can happen. It is designed to work with each age group on their level of need and understanding. Using God’s Word for personal needs involves *doing*.

At the same time, Sunday school helps those who have never heard Bible stories or understood that God’s Word is for them – right here – right now. This includes new converts, those who are visiting for the first time, and even those who are in service out of curiosity. Their needs are also addressed, and many times, their love for God is nurtured best in the Sunday school environment.

On the LOCAL LEVEL

Each one of these parts of the national church is to be used, as much as possible, in the local church.

1. You may not be able to have an extensive training program for the leaders of your local church, but it is vitally important that you have some type of Biblical instruction designed for them. They need to be reminded often of their duties and responsibilities as they help lead the people with whom they live and work. This can be started with a prayer meeting for your leaders and a simple lesson on the qualifications of deacons/leaders. There are some clear scriptures on this (Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus 1:5-9). If the leadership in your church already knows these scriptures, then you have begun the journey to correct church leadership.

2. Any church leader who is able should be sent to the Bible school for further training, especially the pastor. If this is not possible, he should take every opportunity to attend seminars, conferences, workshops, or any other special training offered by the school to assist in the growth and ministry of the leadership of the church.

3. The Portable Bible School is ideal for local church needs. It brings the training of the first church into the local setting. It reminds the leaders how those commissioned to "go into all the world and teach all nations" carried out their task. It gives practical tools to use and helps get members involved in the work of God right where they live.

4. The local Sunday school is the most consistent and useful tool available to us since it is carried out on a weekly basis. It gives leaders a chance to try out their knowledge of God's Word on people who see them all the time, and know if they are genuine or not. It helps the *knowing* process move into the next area of reaching—the *doing*.

As with every other thing in life, if you only talk about it, no one believes you. You have to "practice what you preach." This is not always easy, but is supported throughout the Scriptures. The entire concept of living for God is built on faith. The Bible states, in more places than one, and in the lives of Bible heroes, that "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). In the twentieth verse of that same chapter, James states: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" He continues to speak about Abraham saying, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And

the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:21-26).

James uses the example of Abraham to remind us that faith cannot really exist without commitment to and love for God. We must be devoted to doing His will—if we truly believe in Him and love Him.

John said it well. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14: 23).

CONCLUSION

The great commission is not a request—it is a command. Jesus was not talking about just teaching those who are mature. He was speaking about all people, of all ages, everywhere. What are we doing with this commandment of the Lord to "reach through teaching"?

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is the most consistent and useful means of helping people *know* how to live for God? _____

2. From Genesis to Revelation, what are two ways that God's Word is used to guide people?

3. To whom does the Great Commission send the church? _____

Understanding God and His Ways

When it comes to the Christian faith, I wish I knew more about _____

When it comes to the teachings of the United Pentecostal Church, I wish I knew more about _____

When it comes to the Bible, I wish I knew more about _____

Why do we _____

_____ at church?

Why don't we _____

_____ at church?

I've always wondered why God _____

In my daily life, I don't understand how God fits into _____

A question about Jesus I've always wanted to ask is _____

A question about receiving the Holy Ghost I've always wanted to ask is _____

Learning in our church would be more relevant to me if it dealt with _____

LESSON 5

Organizing Your Sunday School

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen”

(II Peter 3:18).

FOCUS: Let us strive to grow in our understanding and love of Jesus and His Word. A well organized Sunday school will help the church grow, because God’s Word will give people everywhere, of all ages, the answers to their life questions – no matter what their circumstances.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

How Can Sunday School Help the Church Grow?

Every church must first understand its true purpose. What was the church like in the New Testament? Why did Jesus come to earth and train people to continue His work? Luke 19:10 tells us: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” When Jesus left the disciples, He gave them clear instructions as to their purpose and work.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

How is it possible to teach all nations? How do we teach all ages the gospel? If we are going to accomplish this great task of teaching all nations, and all who live in those nations (men, women, and children), we will all have to get involved. Sunday school is the best tool for this purpose.

In his writings, Paul compared the church to a body. In I Corinthians 12:12-27 the church is compared to a body with many parts, and each one important to the whole. Each member has a purpose.

God has a purpose and plan for every soul He saves. Each one must get involved in the work of the church. He must find what particular thing God wants him to do. The eyes do not do the work of the hands, but the body is hindered when either member does not do its job. The church is a body, and it must work together. Your foot does not do its job separated from the leg, does it? The Sunday school must work with the rest of the

church. Each member must do the job God has given him, working with other members.

DEFINING THE NEEDS

Are the sermons you preach meant to minister to the whole body of believers? There are people in your congregation, sometimes the majority, who cannot sit still long enough, or who do not have a vocabulary large enough, to grasp what you are saying. Even though the text is fine, and the message is clear to you, it does not speak to them. Who are these people? Both children and adults fall into this category.

“Children” does not necessarily mean “babies.” “Children” are those from birth to adulthood. Adulthood is defined at different ages, according to cultures. Basically, “adulthood” means one has reached the age where he is able to take care of himself, apart from his parents. This will vary from family to family, and even from child to child. Children have different needs than the adults your lesson is usually intended to reach. As children’s bodies and minds develop, they have different needs and abilities. How do you separate your congregation into divisions of people with the same needs?

1. Preschool Division—These are the smaller children who have not started school. They are just beginning to learn, so are designated as Beginners.

- They will not be able to sit still for long. The teacher needs to use many different activities to keep them moving and learning as they go.
- They need lots of memory work and singing.
- They are extremely curious, and want to see, hear, touch and taste everything.
- They are very “me” oriented and understand things only in concrete terms, such as how God provides their daily food.

2. Primary Division—These children have begun their formal education and can range anywhere from Class One to Class Four (Primary School).

- These children should be able to read, but they will need lots of activity and visual reinforcement to retain what they are taught.
- They LOVE involvement, and this should be encouraged whenever possible.
- The most often asked question of this age group is “Why?”
- They are cooperative and look to their teachers as role models.
- These children are old enough to understand the plan of salvation and obey it as the Spirit

draws them. The teacher of this class is developing faithful church members.

3. Junior Division—Children in this age group are developing their muscles (both mentally and physically) and beginning to shine in certain areas of their schooling. This group can range anywhere from Class Five to Class Eight.

- They still need lots of activities and will be happy to participate. They will also be more willing to sit still than the younger children.
- Juniors often question what they are taught, but they are quick to obey when they understand.
- At this age they can develop personal relationships with God.
- They want to know “how?” and “why?” and enjoy competition in the form of games, puzzles, and contests.

4. Youth Division—This age group (from Class Nine through Class Twelve) is one of the most important groups in your Sunday school. Why? These young people are making life decisions.

- Some will be preparing for marriage during this period.
- Others will determine whether they will continue schooling or begin a career.
- This is a crucial time in the development of their Christian walk. At this age they need to seek the will of God for their lives—not just follow the traditional path others have chosen. These young people need much attention and prayer.
- They need to learn how to find answers in God’s Word for the major decisions they will be making. Sunday school is a great place to help them find the answers for the perplexing problems that they face daily.

5. Young Married Couples/Career Division—This age group is important also, because these young adults are living with the choices they made in recent years, and they must cope with real life circumstances/situations.

- They need to use the Scriptures daily for direction and make it a habit to check God's Word before making any new life decisions.
- Their teacher should be able to help them understand that God’s Word is the guidebook for every choice along life’s road.

6. Adult Division—This group should be divided into at least two different areas.

- New Converts—A special class for those who have just been born into the family of God is

vital to a growing church. This is so important that a failure to work with this group can lead to the loss of most of your new saints. Even though you are still teaching on Wednesday night, and even though there is a general Sunday school lesson taught on Sunday morning, new converts need special care. To teach them the same thing you teach the mature saints is like putting your newborn baby up to the table with your ten-year-old and expecting him to eat the same meal. It just does not work. Newborns in Christ need milk (I Peter 2:2; I Corinthians 3:1-2).

- Mature Saints—These saints need the meat of God’s Word (Hebrews 5:12-14). They should be able to practice the life truths they have been taught. They should be faithful givers, strong witnesses, and committed soul winners. In this division you will find and develop the leaders/workers for your church.
- Both of these adult groups have special needs. They need a different approach (different types of spiritual food) to the truths that are so vital in their lives. Do not neglect either group, or you will regret it as a pastor.

REVIEW - CLASSES NEEDED FOR A GROWING CHURCH

- Beginners
- Primaries
- Juniors
- Youth
- Young Married/Career
- Adult (New Converts)
- Adult (Mature Saints)

For each age division carefully choose a teacher who understands that level's needs. If you don't have one to choose, begin today training Sunday school teachers for each and every age group.

CONCLUSION

In Sunday school, make the needs of the students the number one priority. When people have their needs met, they will continue to come to God’s house. When you teach them that God’s Word has the answer to their needs and how to find those answers, they will grow in grace and knowledge. This is the purpose of the Sunday school.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is the true purpose of every church?

Project Assignment

(Lesson 5)

- Take the story of JOSEPH from the Bible.
 - Choose a class/division of the Sunday school (from lesson 5) that you would like to teach.
 - Beginner
 - Primary
 - Junior
 - Youth
 - Young Married/Career
 - Adult (New Convert)
 - Adult (Mature Saints)
 - Find a main idea (doctrine of the church) that should be emphasized with this age group, according to their needs in daily life.
 - Do not teach the whole story of Joseph in ONE lesson. Concentrate on the one idea that your students need and will understand. (Be sure to pay close attention to the different needs and activities of each different class/division of Sunday school.)
-

Genesis 37:1-4	Joseph's Coat
Genesis 37:5-11	Joseph's Dreams
Genesis 37:12-36	Joseph's Brothers Sell Him as a Slave
Genesis 39	Joseph and Potiphar's Wife
Genesis 40	Joseph Interprets Dreams
Genesis 41:1-36	Joseph Interprets Dreams Again
Genesis 41:37-57	Joseph Becomes a Ruler
Genesis 42	Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt
Genesis 43	Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt Again
Genesis 44	Joseph Tests His Brothers (The Silver Cup)
Genesis 45	Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers
Genesis 46	Joseph Calls His Family to Egypt

LESSON 6

Move On With Sunday School

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him”
(James 1:5).

FOCUS: We cannot allow anything to stop us from reaching out to all ages of people by sharing the love of God and His Word with hungry souls. If we work together, with God’s help, we can do it.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

HOW DO I BEGIN?

Obviously, a small church would not be able to have six or more classes in the beginning (the number suggested in the previous lesson). However, it is important to begin somewhere. Let's look at the classes necessary to get started. Remember, you, the pastor, have the responsibility of beginning the Sunday school. You also have the job of choosing the people who will work with you. Keep in mind the destiny of the souls they will teach.

SETTING GOALS

Sit down and write out some specific goals you have in mind for the growth of your church. Consider the size and needs of your present church. Also look to the future and your hopes and dreams of what God will do.

A. If there are only a few children in your church, begin with two classes – one for those not schooling yet and one for the older children who are able to read and write.

B. Do not forget the needs of the more mature age groups. You will definitely need:

1. A New Convert’s Class
2. A Youth and/or Young Married Class (depending on the needs of the people in your church).

C. The regular adult Sunday school class should be taught to any who do not fit into the above two categories.

CHOOSING TEACHERS

There are definite requirements for all Sunday school teachers. Do not get in a hurry and choose people who are not proven faithful, God-fearing members. Take your time and know their love for God before you choose them as teachers.

A. *They must be faithful, proven members of your congregation, who have obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:38) and who are living a life above reproach.* If you do not have these types of saints in your church, the need for Sunday school is even greater so you can train them up yourself.

B. *They must be willing and eager to be used in the work of God.* Teaching Sunday school is hard work.

C. *They must be prayerful and careful with the souls placed in their charge.* Be prayerful before asking anyone to be a Sunday school teacher. Remember, much of what students learn comes from the example they see before them. So the Sunday school teacher must support his church in giving and tithing.

D. *They must be students of the Bible.* They must read it, hide it in their hearts, and live in obedience to it.

E. *They must live a separated life,* with a marked difference between their lives and the lives of those who are not Christians.

F. Sunday school teachers should be committed to winning souls to Christ. This is the main purpose for Sunday school teachers.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Below are the basic requirements that Sunday school teachers should be working toward all the time. In this way, both the church and the teachers can know whether the job is being done properly.

A. *When the class meets, the teacher should be prepared to teach the Word of God effectively.* Different methods are used for different age groups. Small children do not need lectures. They need to get involved. The teacher should understand his students and be prepared to teach the lesson so they will understand and remember it.

B. *The teacher should visit, and (depending on the ages of his pupils) organize his students to visit.* When any class member does not attend, someone should go to see him or call and find out why he was not present. This lets the student know that he is important and also that the teacher cares. The teacher should encourage class members to express this concern for each other.

C. *The teacher should be regular in attendance.* If he has to miss a Sunday, he must report this ahead of time to the Sunday school director or the pastor. He must be certain that someone is ready to take his class.

D. *If at all possible, the teacher should arrive at least fifteen minutes early on Sunday morning to*

prepare the place where his class will meet, and to greet his students when they arrive. (The importance of this point will be further emphasized in another lesson on discipline.) He should not wait to arrange the seating until after the students arrive.

E. *The teacher should attend training meetings that will help him be a better teacher. He should constantly improve his teaching.*

F. *The teacher should know his students and be committed to helping them. There is only one way for the teacher to get to know the students – spend time with them. The teacher will have to sacrifice some of his personal pleasures and times alone to share with his students. One student at a time is the best way, but this may not be possible – depending on the family situations, and also the student's gender. (Female Sunday school teachers should not spend a lot of time alone with male students, or vice versa.)*

G. *Most importantly, Sunday school teachers should be ready and equipped to win people to Christ. If you choose your Sunday school staff carefully and choose saints who have proven their faithfulness and love for God through the years, this should be easy. They will already be soul winners.*

CHOOSING A DIRECTOR

Many churches choose someone to be in charge of all the classes. (In smaller churches this is your job.) This is a blessing if you choose the right person. Of course, this comes when your church is larger, and you have more people from which to choose. The requirements for the Sunday school director are similar to those of the Sunday school teacher, but obviously, he has more responsibility.

A. *The director should first of all be someone who has been obedient and faithful to the gospel (Acts 2:38). A love for the truth is an absolute necessity for every leader in your church.*

B. *The director must be prayerful and willing to work for the kingdom of God, giving his time and energy to making the Sunday school what it should be.*

C. *The director should be someone who has worked in Sunday school enough to understand how the Sunday school should be organized and also who believes in its goals and purpose.*

D. *The director is responsible to help train teachers, and also encourage them.*

E. *The Sunday school director should be given the opportunity for as much training as possible. He should attend leadership meetings, classes in education, or even the Bible school for at least one*

year. This training would be beneficial to him and also bless the church he is serving.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Since the purpose of all Sunday school work is to win (evangelize) and keep (motivate) souls, the church should support every effort made.

A. A committee could be set up to take the responsibility of the operation of the Sunday school. The pastor or Sunday school director serves as the chairman of this committee.

B. The committee evaluates the material/lessons taught in the Sunday school.

C. The committee would be responsible for who teaches in the Sunday school.

D. The whole church should be responsible for supporting the Sunday school. The church is responsible for:

- 1) Providing places where the classes can meet
- 2) Providing the materials to be used

WHERE WILL CLASSES MEET?

This question often poses the most difficult problem. Many times the church is meeting in one room, and there is no provision for Sunday school classrooms. However, this is where creativity and ingenuity come in. Here are some ideas:

1. Call a meeting of the Sunday school committee, and talk about the possibilities. Begin by looking at where you are presently holding services.

2. Is there any space available on the plot of land where your building is located? Are there any shade trees on your property?

3. Do any of the saints live nearby? Would they be willing to allow a Sunday school class to meet in their yard/verandah?

- Consider building a small thatch shade (poles, grass, branches, mud). These do not cost money, as the members could build them.
- Many times people build small buildings for business, why not build one or two for Sunday school?

WHAT WILL WE USE FOR LITERATURE?

This question often stops all planning for Sunday school. But it should not. In recent years, literature has been written for teaching the different age levels, and more is being produced all the time. Samples of available literature can be obtained from your instructor. These are

LESSON 7

Who Needs What?

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things”

(I Corinthians 13:11).

FOCUS: It makes a lot of difference whether one is a baby or an adult when it comes time to eat dinner. It is equally important in spiritual food. Whatever age and level of maturity one has reached will determine the type of instruction needed.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Each person has special and specific needs. God has made each one different, and He wants us to be individuals. We cannot all receive the same types of lessons or instruction. This means that the leaders of the church must work harder to identify those needs. So, we ask, “Who needs what?”

FIRST - Define the Goal of Christian Education.

We have determined that there is a great general need for training Christians—not only to be better followers of Christ, but also to be soul winners. Good leaders have definite goals.

What is Christian education about in your church? It should be about training and equipping, winning and keeping, caring and sharing God’s love. How do we say this? *“To know, obey, and share God’s will and ways”* is one simple way. This means that we understand, we do, and we reach out to others. No part of this simple formula can be left out. It must be followed completely, or it is of no real value.

SECOND - Determine How to Get the Message

Across. Many times, when we do have Sunday school, it is geared only to the “knowing” portion—recitations, memorization, and being able to quote verses of Scriptures for a reward. This is not the whole of Christian training. Real Christian education is life changing and soul stirring. It equips saints and prepares them to reach out to those who are still searching.

How can you know what your students need? Ask them. That is what the Search Institute did in a study called “Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations”. (Information from this study was found in *Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at Church: &*

How to Fix It, by Thom & Joani Schultz, Group Publishing, 1996, p. 24.)

The teenagers said that at church they wanted to learn:

- How to make friends and be a friend
- To know and love Jesus Christ
- More about who God is

The adults responded in a similar way. They wanted to learn:

- About the Bible
- About developing a personal relationship with Jesus
- About improving skills in showing love and concern

It seems, from this study, that the age group did not matter. Both groups needed the same things—to know God and His Word in a way that would help them live and work better with their fellow man.

However, to reach these goals, a teacher of teens and a teacher of adults would not use the same path. For smaller children another path is needed, although all paths lead to the same goal. “To know, obey, and share God’s will and ways.” The next question is, “How do we get there?”

FOCUS ON LEARNING—NOT TEACHING!

Do you think “learning” is the same thing as “teaching”? No way! When you teach a lesson full of facts and information about Moses, you may believe that you are teaching exciting things about a real person. But, your students may be learning that the life of Moses is as boring as memorizing all the capitals of the countries of the world. What a waste. His life is exciting and full of wonderful lessons for all ages. He is one of the few characters in the Bible that we know about from his childhood throughout his life. His experiences can relate to every age group in your church—if you know how to share him in bite-size pieces to the age level you are teaching.

We have been programmed to believe that if we know what we are talking about, that makes us a teacher. This is not true! We have to know how to get our students to not only know the information, but live it. The best way to do this is to follow the example of the Master Teacher, Jesus.

Jesus used things and ideas that were familiar to His students. He built His lessons around things that the student already understood and used. In Matthew 17:24-27, Jesus used money in a fish’s mouth to teach Peter about the tribute. He sent Peter fishing (his previous occupation) and told him what to look for.

2. *Jesus involved the students in the learning process.* Jesus asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am?" After they answered, He asked, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:14-20). When Peter answered, Jesus knew that someone had LEARNED who He was. He had not told Peter! His life had shown him, and Peter truly knew. Do not feed your students a bunch of information. Challenge them to discover things for themselves. This is called "discovery learning." This involves the student in the process of finding solutions and answers to life questions. This type of learning prepares them to look for solutions to problems that arise when a teacher is not present.

3. *Jesus watched for opportunities to turn events into learning experiences.* When the mother of James and John came asking that her boys be given places of honor in His kingdom, Jesus taught His followers how they should treat each other and about their place in the kingdom of God, as servants and not lords (Matthew 20:20-28).

4. *Jesus gave His students the opportunity to practice what they had learned.* This was vividly portrayed at the Last Supper. He gave both Peter and Judas a chance to act out their learning, and their failures teaches us all something! (Matthew 26:20-25; 31-35; 47-50; 55-56; 69-75) Sometimes, failure is the best teacher – if we learn what we are supposed to do to get it right.

If you are teaching/preaching about telling others how God is working in your life, stop right there and have your audience turn to their neighbor (probably someone they know) and tell them a recent experience. This will make it easier to share their faith and salvation experience with a stranger who is hurting and needs to hear about Jesus. This is putting their "learning" into practice.

THIRD - Discover What the Students Have Actually Learned. One of the best ways to do this is to watch as your students begin living by the life principles they have studied from God's Word.

Another way is to ask questions. Many times, we are afraid to ask questions or probe into the results of our efforts, because we are afraid that we will not get a positive answer. However, all of learning is not done positively! If you fail to pay your light bill and the electricity corporation turns off your lights, you will be more careful the next month to pay your bills promptly! So, ask questions, and learn from your mistakes. Knowing what your students learned, or did not learn, will show you how to improve your teaching.

FINALLY - Determine What Each Age Group Needs. Search Institute, in the study mentioned earlier, discovered that in America, only 11% of teenagers who attend church had developed their own faith. Of the adults studied, only 32% had a well-developed faith. And sadder still was the percentage of Christian education teachers who had developed their faith—39%. That is well less than HALF of those who were training others.

What is wrong? We are trying to feed fried fish to our six-month-old babies, and we are feeding mashed cereal to our thirty-year-old adults. No wonder they do not return to eat from our table. We are not feeding them properly, and both groups will eventually starve to death. The next few lessons will deal exclusively with how to work out this problem.

CONCLUSION

Meeting the specific needs of each age level makes Christian education a challenge. But it also makes it interesting and exciting. Follow in the footsteps of the Master Teacher and use His methods to reach out to those around you. As you focus on learning, you, too, can bless your students as you teach them how to love and live by God's Word.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. List two (2) similar points that both teenagers (thirteen to nineteen years old) and adults (those over nineteen years of age) said they wanted to learn about at church.

2. What is the difference in "learning" and "teaching"? _____

3. What is the first step in determining "Who needs what?" in our church's Christian education plans? _____

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

(LESSON 7)

We need to hear from YOU! Please provide the answers to the following questions, and return the completed form to your Sunday school teacher/pastor. Write only what you remember. Do not use your Bible or any other book to help you find the answers. If you cannot remember, just write "I don't know" in the blank. This is not a test and will not be graded. It is only for our information so we can serve you better. No one will know this is your survey, so please be honest. GOD BLESS YOU!

1. Think back to the last time that you attended Sunday school. What did you learn from that lesson?

2. How would you describe Sunday school and church? _____

3. What must a person do to get to heaven? _____

4. Who is Jesus? _____
5. Why did Jesus have to die? _____

6. What happened to Jesus after His death and burial? _____

7. What could you do that would make God stop loving you? _____

8. Who is the Holy Ghost? _____
9. How would you describe God? _____

10. In the past 7 days, have you read the Bible while you were alone? Yes _____ or No _____
11. In the past 7 days, have you prayed by yourself? Yes _____ or No _____
12. In the past 7 days, has your family prayed together, other than giving thanks for meals?
Yes _____ or No _____
13. In the past 7 days, has your family read the Bible together? Yes _____ or No _____
14. How often do you talk to your friends about God? Never or rarely _____ Sometimes _____ Often _____
15. Which of the following best describes your relationship with Jesus Christ?
_____ I don't really have a relationship with Jesus Christ.
_____ I'm not sure.
_____ I'm not committed to Christ.
_____ I have a good relationship with Jesus Christ.
16. Think about what you're taught in classes at church. How often do those lessons shape how you think or act outside of church?
_____ Often (every week) _____ Sometimes (maybe once or twice a month)
_____ Rarely (maybe once or twice a year) _____ Never (the lessons don't relate to my life)
17. Why do you go to church? _____ I want to _____ Someone makes me go _____ Other _____

(This questionnaire was adapted from *Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at Church: And How to Fix It* by Thom & Joani Schultz, pp. 48, 49.)

LESSON 8

God's Hidden Word

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:9-11).

FOCUS: The only way to keep a life clean before God is to hide His Word in the heart. The time to begin this is with children. If they know, understand, and live by God's Word their entire lives, the devil will have a hard time tricking them. We need to be sure that God's Word is the most valuable treasure a child ever finds.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This old saying makes good sense. These wise words are true in the physical world for sure. It is always better to avoid sickness, than to have to go to the doctor.

Spiritually, avoiding sin is also the wisest way. We know how badly we feel when we have done something wrong. We do not need anyone to tell us that we have messed up. We know it. That inner voice, the conscience, speaks clearly. No matter where we live or what language we speak, our conscience talks in our dialect. Even those who do not know the laws of God, understand what it means to break the laws of the land. They have family and tribal laws, and their inner voices are active. In Romans Paul wrote:

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Romans 2:14-15).

How is it possible for our conscience to accuse or excuse our actions? What tells us if we are doing right or wrong? Usually, this understanding of right and wrong comes from the laws that we know. It can be the rules in our family, or the laws that govern our city, state/region, and nation. Every living creature understands that life has laws. There are laws of nature that govern the seasons, the weather, and even the way animals act. Everyone lives by the law of gravity—what goes up must come down.

How do we wake up our conscience and make sure it is working properly? How do we insure that we are obeying the laws that will make our lives the best they can possibly be? The answer is found in our key verse. God's Word, hidden in our hearts, tells us everything we need to know about life.

So, how do we hide God's Word in our hearts? Does this mean that we must carry a Bible everywhere we go? Are we supposed to have surgery and implant a Bible inside of us? God's hidden Word is none of these things. It is simply:

- Having a clear understanding of Bible truths
- Living according to God's laws.

Another term for hiding God's Word in our hearts is “Scripture memorization.” We have all heard of it, but we do not all appreciate and utilize this priceless ability. Memorizing God's Word is the best possible means for sin PREVENTION. Hiding God's Word in our hearts teaches us how to live our lives to the fullest. “Knowing” and “doing” God's Word keeps us from sin—the cause of death. Oh, what joy to know that God has provided a means by which we can all have happy lives—His Word stored in our minds and hearts and obeyed every day?

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

The mind is one of the most exciting and wonderful parts of the human being. It is capable of things that are absolutely amazing. It can be programmed to remember a scene or passage of words throughout a lifetime. God not only gave us the rules for an abundant life, He supplied the equipment needed to store them.

Psalm 119:11 speaks about the “heart”. What does that have to do with the mind? Again, we find the answer in God's Word.

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34).

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

According to these two verses, the heart is the source of the spoken word.

There are many verses of Scripture that make it clear, when God's Word speaks of the “heart,” it is

LESSON 9

Hide and Go Seek

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you”

(Philippians 4:8-9).

FOCUS: The mind is a powerful tool. Since the beginning of time, the battle for man’s soul has been fought there. When the devil got Eve to think about the forbidden fruit, she acted in a forbidden way. Eve may have lost the first battle, but we have hope of winning the war. From that time, the battle for the soul (heart) has been fought in the seat of understanding, the mind. It is very important that God’s Word is a major part of what we think about every day, because that is how we win against Satan and his tricks. God’s Word will keep us safe and show us the path that leads to eternal life.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

There are many terrible things to think about in our world—wars, famine, pestilence, violence, disease, and death. But, God’s Word has a different way of viewing this wicked world. God’s Word tells us that these things are signs of the soon return of our Saviour (Matthew 24:6-8). Death is not final for those who know the Lord, and all war and violence lead to the final battle when Jesus will come again to fight for His people (Revelation 19:11-16). It all depends on how you look at it.

This is a good example of the importance of knowing, understanding, and following Scripture. If we look at the circumstances and the problems around us, we could despair. But when we know that God’s Word foretells these things (and even more), we can have the peace of God in our hearts, ruling our lives.

KEYS TO SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

How do we hide God’s Word in our hearts so that we will know how to deal with life’s pressures? The same way that we would unlock a door—just use the keys. But what are they?

- 1) **Comprehension is first.** This means that we understand enough to use the information/help that the verse supplies.
- 2) **Application is the second key,** and simply, it is asking, “How does this verse fit my life right here, right now?”
- 3) **Repetition is last,** but certainly not the least important. This key does the same thing again and again until there is no doubt that the scripture will always be remembered.

Each key is important, and we need to look at them separately to be sure we understand how to use them.

Comprehension

Acts 2:38 is basic to our faith. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” You probably already know Acts 2:38 from memory, but can you explain what it means? Would this be a good memory verse for six-year old children? Would adults understand it?

It might prove difficult because of such terms as “repent,” “be baptized,” “remission of sins,” and “receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Perhaps, your students could say the words back to you, like a parrot, but would a parrot know what he was talking about? No and neither would young children, or even some adults who have never heard these terms. What should you do to help them?

- Paraphrasing (to say in simple terms) is one good way to improve the students’ understanding. It is used for comprehension only, not for memorizing. God’s Word should always be memorized word for word, but it should be understood first.
- Break the verse/passage into smaller (bite-sized) pieces. Make sure that each portion is understood before it is memorized. With smaller children, they can sometimes learn only a portion of the verse at a time, and continue in this manner for several weeks until the verse is completed.
- Choose verses/passages that will mean something in the life situations of your students. Some verses in God’s Word fit any age group or circumstance and will be meaningful to those who learn them.
- Make sure that doctrinal verses are learned and understood first, as they are most important. We do not want to just stuff our students full of Bible verses such as the genealogies found in the book of Numbers for

3. Why is repetition important in memorizing Scripture? _____

4. Why might it be difficult to teach small children to memorize Acts 2:38?

5. Is it possible that adults might have a problem memorizing Acts 2:38? Why?

6. According to the key verse of this lesson, what is the secret to being at peace - no matter what? _____

7. Where is the most important battle for the souls of humans fought? _____

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

LESSON 10

Aim for Understanding

“Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart”

(Psalm 119:33-34).

FOCUS: As we turn our hearts and efforts toward meeting the needs of our students, we should do all we possibly can to help them have a clear understanding. Only when students understand God’s Word will they love and obey it.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

As we work toward being creative and presenting the gospel in a way that the people we oversee can relate to it, we must be careful that they understand what God’s Word requires of them. All of our efforts will be in vain if they do not understand. So first, we need to fix our aim. But what do we mean by the “aim”?

An aim is a clear statement of what you hope to accomplish with the lesson. The aim is designed for you, the teacher. It gives your lesson direction and purpose, and helps you decide what methods are needed to get the point across. Having an aim also means that when something unexpected happens in the classroom (a question, surprise incident, etc.), you will be able to stay on track and possibly use this interruption to help reach the aim. If your aim is not clear, when something occurs that was not planned, you can be distracted and nothing of value will be accomplished with the lesson.

How do you fix your aim?

There are two things that must be considered before deciding your aim.

- What is the Bible story talking about?
- What do my students need to learn from this story?

The best source of reference for checking your Bible story is—you guessed it—the Bible. God’s Word gives a clear picture of every Bible story. Make sure that what you teach agrees with what the Word of God says.

When you know what the Bible says in any given story, you can then search for the things in that story that will help your students in their daily lives. What situations are they facing? What are some of the life decisions they have to make on a

regular basis? With whom do they live and work? These questions must be answered before the aim of the lesson can be fixed. The only way to know the answers is to know your students. Spend time with them. Talk to them, and most of all listen—not only to what they say, but also to their silent communication, how they act. You cannot do this unless your attention is focused toward your students and not on yourself (trying to make a good impression).

There must always be a time of prayer and seeking the face of God before deciding on a lesson aim. Sometimes, only God knows the things that your students need. Even if you know something about them, God wants His Word to reveal the hidden things of the heart. So, prayer is essential in the process of fixing a lesson aim.

What are the aims of the church in general?

Every teacher is responsible for helping fulfill the aims of the church. In Christian education, the major aim of the church is to share the Word of God so that every person who hears it will listen, obey, and learn how to use it. Some general things fall in line with this broad aim.

- All teaching should be done with the aim of winning souls to Christ.
- All teaching should include the beautiful fact of Christ’s provision for “abundant” life. We have the opportunity of living in a full and joyful way—following Jesus!
- We should help each student find God’s will for his life.
- An underlying purpose in Christian education is to encourage and train students to worship God. Worship simply means “fellowship with God” and without it, no one can draw close to Him.
- Each student needs to be taught a Bible-based lifestyle. Developing Christian character in believers is a major aim of the church. It is vital to the student’s spiritual growth.
- It follows that when one is living for God on a daily basis, he will be looking for ways to be of service to the kingdom of God and His family. Students will be more concerned for others with each passing day.

What are some of the aims of the Bible lessons?

Christian education is concerned with the amount of knowledge that students have about God’s Word. This includes facts and information, but the basis for this knowledge should be the understanding of God’s Word so it can be used. People need to know how to study the Bible. This is one aim of every lesson.

Bible knowledge in itself accomplishes nothing. There must be compassion for the lost. There should be a feeling of the love God had for each member of lost humanity. We also need a sense of urgency to become more like God in the way we think and act. The Bible lessons we teach need to inspire an attitude of love toward others. Attitudes have a lot to do with our interaction with others. God's Word, and the lessons we learn from it, help to keep our attitudes in line with His.

As Christian educators, we are not just concerned with knowledge and attitude. We are looking for changed lives. Since it is easy to see a change in someone's behavior, it is also easy to make this part of the lesson aim.

How do I decide on the aim for THIS lesson?

When you are ready to decide on an aim for your lesson, remember these points. Your lesson aim should be:

- Brief and easily remembered.
- Plain enough to meet the needs of the students.
- Clear enough for the point to be obvious.
- Practical enough so that it is easily done.
- Interesting enough for students to become involved.
- Relevant enough that it relates to both the students and the broad objectives of the unit of lessons being taught in the whole church.

Determine the aim for each lesson, and work hard to fulfill its goals. In this way, you accomplish a small portion of the broader vision of the whole church, one small bite at a time.

CONCLUSION

It takes time to create an aim for each lesson, but it is well worth the effort. Having a visible/spoken goal makes a difference. Knowing the aims of the church in general and your local assembly in particular makes your work in Christian education more focused. You will be able to see that your aims are being met, and this will be a blessing to you, your class, and the church as a whole.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is a lesson aim? _____

2. What are the two (2) things to consider before deciding on your lesson aim?

3. How do you determine what your students need from any given lesson? _____

4. What is the aim of all Christian education? _____

5. What is one basic underlying purpose for Christian education? _____

6. What three (3) things are a part of Christian education that should be used as a basis for every lesson aim? _____

7. What are six (6) characteristics that should be a part of every lesson aim? _____

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

LESSON 11

From Start to Finish

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the LORD, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty"
(Revelation 1:8).

FOCUS: Everything we do for God needs to have a proper beginning and a correct ending. God began His creation with approval that everything He had made was *"very good"* (Genesis 1:31). When He judges His redeemed creation, the final words will be, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"* (Matthew 25:21). When we teach a lesson, we need to keep these same principles in mind—begin and end well.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

God has given us a wonderful example to follow, and so many good things in His Word to share, why don't we begin now? Besides the need to begin immediately, let's do it *right*. In Christian education, we begin in God's Word. That is the only sure foundation for every lesson and study that we share. We have no beginning outside of Him. When we base our efforts inside of His book (the Bible), we can be sure it will be "very good."

Choosing the Scripture Setting and Key Verse

Your first job is to determine exactly which scriptures you are going to use as the basis for your lesson. Make sure that the verses you choose best tell the story you are using. Do not try to use every scripture available that talks about your lesson. Be specific with the aim and doctrine involved.

For example, in the project assignment from Lesson 5, a number of passages tell the story of Joseph. Choose the one that tells the portion of Joseph's story you are dealing with. When teaching about "Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors", you would not need the entire thirty-seventh chapter of Genesis. Verses 1-4 tell the story, and they would become your scripture setting/text.

After you have carefully read and decided upon the scripture setting, look for a key verse that best applies to the purpose/aim of the lesson. It may be inside the scripture setting you have chosen, or it may be in an entirely different chapter and book. The whole idea is to find one verse that will drive home the doctrine being studied. With the story of "Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors," if you

were emphasizing the love that Jacob had for Joseph, you might use I John 3:1.

However, if you wanted to teach a lesson about how cruel jealousy is, you might choose from another place, such as Song of Solomon 8:6, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." You might even want to use just the portion of this verse that speaks of jealousy, or even choose Proverbs 6:34, *"For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance."*

Your choice of a key verse will depend on several things:

- What age are your students?
- What is the doctrine you are teaching?
- What is the aim of your lesson?

When you have answered each of these questions, it becomes simple to choose the right verse for the students to hide in their heart—the one that focuses on the aim of the lesson.

HOW Do I Begin?

It is easier to decide *how* to begin the lesson when you are sure about *whom*. Always begin a children's lesson in a different way than you would one for an adult. As with every other part of your lesson, the introduction will be treated differently, according to the age and need of your students.

Why is this important? The age of your students, and even their spiritual age, makes a difference in their ability to comprehend and apply the lesson. If you wanted to feed carrots to your marriage partner, how would you prepare them? Adults eat such foods many ways: boiled, steamed, raw, etc. However, if you were going to feed carrots to your one-year-old baby, you would cook them very well, and then mash them. The same is true with the spiritual food you are presenting in your lesson. Feed your students according to their abilities and needs.

After you have considered the ages and needs of your students, choose a method of introduction that will gain their attention and make them hungry to know more. As found in *Teach With Success* by Guy Leavitt, here are some important things to remember with your beginning (or introduction):

- Be brief. The Bible story is the most important thing; so spend most of your time with it.

- Concentrate on the lesson aim. Remember what you are trying to accomplish with this lesson, and stick with it.
- Make your opening positive. Speak positive goals from God's Word, and not negative things about human failings.
- Use variety. Use different means of beginning the lesson—if not every week, at least every month.

One of the poorest ways to open a lesson for any age group is by calling for attention. "Let me have your attention, please" can be taken as a signal to get comfortable and have a nap! It is important to catch the students' attention at the beginning. What are some *good* ways to begin the class?

Use an object/demonstration that relates to the subject. Here are some ideas:

- Giving—everyone associates giving with the offering bowl/plate. If you hold one or place it in front of the class, your students will immediately know what you are going to talk about.
- Faithfulness—ask the person who has had the Holy Ghost for longest period of time to stand and give his testimony. Or, bring the person who has been the most faithful in church attendance to the front and have the class give him a clap offering.
- Evangelism—bring a bag of seeds and have someone demonstrate the best method of planting those particular seeds.
- Introduce the Christmas story by having the class pretend they are riding a donkey to their grandmother's house.

There are many possibilities with this type of opening, so use your imagination, and let your creativity soar!

Use an illustration. Jesus opened most of His lessons with an illustration (story) called a parable. He caught His students' attention because He spoke about things they understood and used in their daily lives. Here are some suggestions:

- "Once upon a time" lets everyone know that you are about to tell a story. But be sure you keep it short, and that it has a definite point that relates to the lesson.
- A newspaper article can be used to get the class in discussion about a need or problem that they are facing, such as an upcoming election that needs much prayer. This lesson could teach about praying for our leaders—both spiritual and physical.

- A problem illustration could use an experience of a class member and involve the class in solving it.

Asking a question that makes the students think is an effective means of beginning a class. Make getting the class involved a major goal. This can be done in several ways:

- Why are you not in school today? (teaching a lesson on the Sabbath).
- What question did Jesus ask that we all have to answer? (teaching a lesson on the greatest commandment).
- Asking a question straight from the Bible, such as: "Who do you say that I the Son of man am?" (One God).

You can catch your students' attention in many other ways, and get their minds focused on the lesson. There is no one way to do this for any given subject. It is the teacher's job to prayerfully find the best way for each lesson.

The next part of the lesson is the most important and will be discussed at length in Lesson 12. However, we need to mention its place right after the opening/introduction. The Bible story, (God's Word), should always be given the most time, attention, and prayerful effort.

The FINISH Line

Another important part of every lesson is the closing. During this time, always give your students an opportunity to pray and become a part of God's family. This takes proper planning and preparation. Be careful that your lesson does not just stop. In closing, be sure that your main point has been understood and will be applied in the days to come. Plan the amount of time needed to give the students an opportunity to respond to the lesson. There are some important things to remember at the finish line:

- Make sure that the aim has been accomplished.
- Give the students an opportunity to decide to follow Jesus, or to obey Him more fully.

If we do not plan to close properly, the opportunity to reach our students' hearts will be lost.

How Do I Cross the Finish Line?

- Keep your closing short and to the point.
- Lead your students to action and decision.
- Always show your concern for the response that you receive.
- Have a clear plan for leading the students to do something about what they have learned—

LESSON 12

God's Word

The Great Connection

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life"
(I Timothy 6:19).

FOCUS: Every church needs a good foundation of Christian education. Without a proper foundation in the Word of God, we will never make it to heaven. Every lesson and story taught must have its roots and application in the Bible—our sure foundation.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Now that we have a better understanding about how to begin and end a lesson, we need to concentrate on how to get the most out of the scripture text/Bible story that we are teaching. To do this, we must first take the student from the known (last week's lesson) to the unknown (the lesson for today). We sometimes call this "review." Keep it short and simple with the purpose of connecting the old lesson with the new.

All of our lessons should be joined by a common thread of purpose—the overall theme/aim of the church for this time. This connection will sometimes be obvious. At other times, only the teacher will see it, but it should always be included.

Creativity is an important tool in most parts of the lesson, but the Bible story itself must be totally accurate. The creativity comes with HOW you present the story. When reading the actual verses, it may be helpful to use maps, charts, or even an outline to give the students a better understanding of what the verses mean. The teacher should make clear the following things about the scriptures used in the lesson:

- Who was talking?
- Whom are they talking to?
- During what time period of Bible history was this passage written/spoken?
- Why was this passage written/spoken?

Sometimes, these questions have obvious answers, and at other times, they require explanation. It is important to make the Bible (scripture reference) as clear as possible to your students.

In the book *Creative Bible Teaching* by Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt is an excellent method used by teachers who are interested in

getting everything possible from a Bible lesson. They call it the "Inductive Study Method." It goes something like this:

- Observation—What does it say?
- Interpretation—What does it mean?
- Generalization—What is the big idea?
- Application—What difference does it make?
- Implementation—What must I change?

(*Creative Bible Teaching*, by Lawrence O. Richards & Gary J. Bredfeldt, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1998, p. 64.)

Let's look at these different parts in detail.

Observation

- Who was doing the talking?
- What was the reason this book was written?
- What was happening in history during the time this book was written?
- Is this book an epistle, a poem, a prophecy, or what?
- What was the writer saying in the whole book?
- How does the passage we are studying fit into this whole theme?
- What was said right before this scripture?
- What was said right after this scripture?
- Is anything repeated in this passage?
- Does the writer make any comparisons or contrasts?
- Does the writer ask any questions or provide any answers to previous questions?
- Does the writer mention any relationships made possible by something in the passage?
- Is there movement from one place to another, from one time period to another, or from one action to another?
- Is there a finale to the whole passage?
- What types of verbs are used in this passage? Are they action verbs? Are they linking? If linking, what words do they join?

All of these questions provide a basic study to determine what the Bible is saying.

Interpretation

- How do these scriptures join with the rest of the Bible to form a unified Word of God?
- The things happening around and during the actual passage are important to how the scriptures are interpreted.
- What would be the natural meaning of the words of this passage?

Generalization

Now we want to discover what the major teaching or principle of this passage is. We do that by asking these questions:

- What is the writer talking about?
- What is his subject?
- What is the writer saying in these verses?
- What is the believer supposed to do now?

Application

It is important that we understand what is going on in any passage of scripture before we apply it to our lives. When we know who was talking, whom they were talking to, and why, we can better see how it will help us. Let us ask four more questions:

- Is there something in this passage that we need to learn and obey?
- Do these scriptures rebuke our actions or attitudes?
- Is there something we must do to make things right?
- How do these scriptures help train us to live right?

Implementation

Now we have to ask:

- What must we do in order to make these scriptures come alive in our lives?
- How should we act?
- What things should we do or not do to fulfill the lessons we have learned from this passage?

With these questions should come the opportunity for prayer and personal soul-searching. Talk to God about what you are doing wrong or what you are not doing that you should be. Ask Him for guidance and help as you work toward becoming more like Him through studying and obeying His Word.

CONCLUSION

This style of teaching and studying will help you get the most out of your lesson and will also help your students use it in their daily lives. Read a scripture passage, dig into it and discover the treasures God has stored there. But do not stop there. Remember that all Sunday school teaching has as its purpose the needs of the students.

Now that you have worked out the Bible lesson so that it has meaning and relevance, focus on how to use that meaning to meet the needs of your students. Use your questionnaire from Lesson 4 or make up a new one to help discover the things your students need. Then, use every creative method possible to get your students involved.

The devil does not mind using every trick imaginable to do this, so why should we fear? Let us be bold in our plans, fervent in our prayers, and persistent in our goal.

*We want to see God at work in the hearts and lives
...of all students
...of every age
in all our churches!
AMEN*

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is meant by "review"? _____

2. How do you use creativity in a Bible lesson? _____

3. What are four (4) questions that the teacher should ask to make sure the scripture passage is understood? _____

4. What are the five (5) parts to the "Inductive Study Method" and what does each one mean? _____

LESSON 13

The How of Christian Education

“AND He began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine”

(Mark 4:1-2).

FOCUS: The *how* of Christian education is the method used to get the message/lesson across to the students. There is no better place to search for methods than in God’s Word. Jesus was the best teacher (Christian educator) there has ever been, or ever will be. What He did and said is still changing lives. Why was He so effective? Jesus was a master at understanding what would get His lesson across to His students, and He took the time to be sure that He used the method that worked.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Many methods are used to teach, no matter what your culture or where you live. Different lessons call for different methods. It also makes a difference what method you use if you know the students, or if they are strangers.

Jesus knew the people He taught. (Not only was He one of them, He had made them.) He understood their needs, and spoke to them in simple language.

- He used their tools. (Peter was a fisherman—Matthew 17:24-27.)
- He spoke of their problems. (Israel was a nation of shepherds—Matthew 18:10-14.)
- He used their prejudices to teach some important lessons. (The Jews hated the Samaritans, a mixed race—Luke 10:30-37.)

Jesus often used one of the oldest and most common methods of getting a message across—storytelling.

Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the most effective means to get your point across to all ages. Studying Jesus’ example, we learn that it is important that the story relates to the lives and understanding of the students. The story should clearly illustrate the main point of the lesson. There should be no need to explain the story. It should speak for itself!

This not only saves time, it encourages the students to think for themselves, and apply the story to their actions/attitudes.

Here are some ways you can make a simple story come alive:

- Use different voice techniques, such as whispering, shouting, singing. Let your voice express the emotions of the story—sad, mad, happy, discouraged, lonely, hopeful, or just plain disgusted.
- Involve the students in telling the story. Have them take parts as characters in the story, or let them be the seeds planted, the trees in the forest, or animals such as a donkey, lion, or sheep.
- Allow the students to make the sounds and motions needed for the story, such as the wind, thunder and lightning, a burning bush.

Involving the students in the story is exciting. This method can be used with almost every age group. Even older students enjoy taking part. After you get the first bold volunteer going, others will be eager to join in.

Jesus did not teach from a Bible. He *was* God’s Word. Be sure that your students understand that the Bible story is not a story you have made up. Stories from God’s Word should be told with an open Bible in your hands as a sign that you are sharing what God has said. If they have a Bible, or they are old enough to read, the students can be involved in the sharing of the verses. No matter the age of your students, be sure that the source of the story is clear.

It is not bad to use a made-up story, but when you do, tell the students that this story is one that someone thought up and wrote for other people to enjoy. This type of story is useful when you are trying to get a special lesson or point across to the students. After reading the story, involve them in the search for a story or passage from the Bible that teaches the same lesson. When telling a Bible story, however, make sure the students know that *this* story is true, and it comes straight from God’s Word.

Lecture

This is probably the most familiar method of teaching a Bible lesson, and has been accused of being the most boring. This does not have to be true! Lectures can be extremely interesting if you take the time to prepare them. The reason lectures have been given a bad name, is that they do not usually involve anyone except the teacher. If this is how you lecture, please do not try it with small children. However, a great teacher can make the

students feel as though they are a part of the lecture.

Jesus used the lecture method often in His earthly ministry. What do you suppose the Sermon on the Mount was (Matthew 5-7)? It was one of the best lectures ever given.

What made it special? Jesus used some of the same techniques for lecturing that He did for storytelling.

- He made sure that His words spoke to the needs of the people (Matthew 5:21-26).
- He used illustrations about everyday things, such as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).
- He dealt with issues that were prevalent in that day (Matthew 5:27-32).
- After every rebuke for a wrongdoing, He made sure the people knew the reward for obedience (Matthew 6:1-4).
- He told stories and used examples that related to the culture and traditions (Matthew 5:33-42).

Jesus lectured in a manner that the people never forgot! We can do the same.

Questions That Make You THINK

This was probably one of Jesus' most effective teaching methods. Many times He refused to give a straight answer, but rather chose to ask questions that caused His followers to think. This is an effective method of teaching. However, you must ask questions that are specific—questions that require the students to focus on the problem or need that the lesson is dealing with.

Jesus used this method in two different ways. He often asked a question, and then left the people to figure it out for themselves. This was what happened in Matthew 16:13-20. Again, in Matthew 21:23-27, when His authority was questioned, He answered with a question, and refused to say anything more.

In the next verses, Jesus used a question to begin a story. He concluded His story with another question. After the people had answered Him, He told them what it meant in their lives (Matthew 21:28-32).

Both of these question methods are effective. Their main purpose is to cause the student to think. There does not always have to be just one answer, but there should be a specific principle involved in the answer. This teaching method requires some serious thought and prayer on the part of the teacher, but can be extremely effective in touching hearts with truth.

The question method is best used with older students. However, simple concrete questions could be used to get the attention of your younger students, and then move on very quickly to some type of action.

Monologue

This teaching method does not require "things" to make it exciting, interesting, and effective. A monologue is simply a "dramatized speech by one person." It is not a lecture though, because the "one person" becomes the character or characters in the lesson/story. How can you become more than one person in a monologue?

- Change your voice.
- Turn away.
- Put on a different hat or other clothing article.
- Change facial expressions.
- Turn your back to the students, and when you face them again, you are a different person!

Right before the students' eyes, they see the story. Motions and extreme facial and voice expressions bring the story to life. Small children *love* this, and adults do too. The Bible is full of stories and characters that come alive with this teaching method.

One requirement for a monologue is an imagination. You must be able to imagine how the person looked, sounded, walked, felt, and spoke. Never add anything to the Bible truth, but give the characters personality. Make them *real*. Turn your imagination on, and let it soar.

CONCLUSION

The methods we have talked about in this lesson (most of them used by Jesus Himself) do not require any movement on the part of the students. The teacher does the action, and the response of the students may not be an obvious change, but a change of attitude/heart. Using these methods you have to be well prepared, and work especially hard to make the lesson interesting and easily understood. Jesus is our best example of a great teacher, and He made these methods seem simple and exciting. With prayer and work, you can do the same.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. List three (3) of the methods studied in this lesson that were used by Jesus.

LESSON 14

The Rest of the Story

“And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things”

(Mark 6:34).

FOCUS: Many different methods that actively involve the students can be used to teach all ages. Everyone loves to take part and remembers more when personally involved in the learning process.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Jesus was concerned about the people He taught. His compassion caused Him to spend much time and effort making sure that they understood His lessons. He wanted them to think. He also wanted them to change. We are looking for the same results. Here are some methods that will involve the students in the learning process.

Role-Playing

Role-playing excites children. They love to pretend. You can ask everyone to “become” blind Bartimaeus, or you can choose one person. The remainder of the class can then become the crowd, and one can even pretend to be Jesus. How do you think Bartimaeus got Jesus’ attention? Did he whisper or did he shout? Was he calm or excited? Your students will enjoy deciding. If there is time, repeat the story, choosing a different person to be the Bible character, and see how he thinks his character acted/looked/felt.

With this method, not only people have roles. *Things* can take on character also. What about the wood used for Noah’s ark or the animals? Present the Bible story from the viewpoint of one of these things, and let the students take on that role. Since there is lots of action involved in role-plays, use it mostly with younger students. Adults occasionally like spice and action in their lessons too, so do not limit your use of role-plays to one age group. If your congregation is small, and you do not have anyone to help you teach Sunday school, use this method to involve the class in one big role-play.

Drama

We all love a good drama. We enjoy being touched or uplifted by a story that we see acted out. We enjoy it even more when we have a part in it. Many wonderful stories in God’s Word are perfect for this teaching method. Drama can be simple. Ask for a volunteer for each character in

the story. Then, as you tell the story, the students act it out.

With older students and more time, add speaking parts. The Bible story must not be changed. But filling in the way the person felt or might have acted makes the story come alive.

Use drama as often as possible, but be sure it is not the only teaching method you use. The students will become bored—even with all the action. Variety encourages students to come back, because surprise is refreshing to all ages.

Pantomime

This method is most enjoyed by small children. They love to pantomime (do what you do, say what you say). A regular pantomime does not involve speaking, except on the part of the storyteller. The students simply act out the story. They become people, things, or even ideas. The motions are exaggerated, so those watching will get the idea. It is a bit like using sign language to talk to someone, and it involves lots of facial expression, but no talking.

Younger students love echo pantomime. It requires more preparation on the part of the teacher. Every action and word, has to be planned before the lesson begins, because the students copy everything you do and say. Use lots of sound effects and rhyming words. Little children also enjoy repeating words and phrases. The whole class will have fun.

Object Lesson

Jesus used the things around Him to help the people understand His lessons. He took a little child in His arms and taught a lesson on becoming “like” a little child to enter the kingdom of heaven. He taught the woman at the well an object lesson by using something she was familiar with—the well. He told her that the Spirit of God was “like” a well of living water. We can relate to that. Object lessons give spiritual applications to familiar things. They take one thing and say “this is like” another thing. The word “like” is an important part of these lessons.

Object lessons can be used for all ages, but are most effective with older students. Younger students enjoy watching older students use objects to tell a story or teach a lesson. This is a good way to involve all ages in the same lesson.

CONCLUSION

These are only a few ways to involve students in a lesson. It is by no means a complete list. However, it starts you on your quest for creative

LESSON 15

Learning to Enjoy God's Ways

*"Train up a child in the way he should go;
and when he is old, he will not depart from
it"*

(Proverbs 22:6).

FOCUS: As Christian educators, we are not just imparting knowledge, but developing lifelong practices that will make a tremendous difference in how our students think and act. Our goal is to lead them to *love* what they learn and to *live* it. To "train" children (and adults too) involves proper discipline.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

These familiar words penned by King Solomon, the wisest of kings (besides God Himself), have been used by many, but understood by few. "Train up a child" has a special meaning. Most who quote this verse refer to the knowledge of God's Word given to children/students. They teach children to quote scripture, and even answer doctrinal questions correctly, but this is not the "training" Solomon was referring to.

The Hebrew word for "train" means to "dedicate." The meaning for the English word "dedicate" (according to *Webster's New World Encyclopedic Dictionary*) is "to devote to a serious purpose." Solomon's writing tells us that we should take the ways of the Lord seriously, and be sure that our children/followers are devoted to walking in them. This does not happen with just knowledge! Any type of "dedication" requires "discipline."

What Does "Discipline" Have to Do with "Training"?

How do you "train" an athlete (football star, boxer, swimmer, skater, gymnast, etc.)? From an early age, he spends time developing muscles, learning special skills, and constantly improving the methods and practices of his chosen sport. Throughout his life, his main focus is his special field of performance.

His devotion to his sport costs something. He does not play around as other children do, but spends many hours daily working, usually with a coach. He studies all the available information on how to improve his skill. He focuses his whole life on achieving his goal of being the best in his field.

This type of dedication and devotion requires discipline. *Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines "discipline" as several things:

- The training of the mind and character
- A mode of life in accordance with rules
- Self-control
- Control, order, obedience to rules

Without proper self-discipline, an athlete cannot be trained. Unless he has a sense of the importance of what he is doing, he wastes the coach's time.

Many times, other things pull at his time and attention. Circumstances, outside events, family pressures, peer pressure and even physical pain and suffering will try to take him away from his desired goal. But if he really wants to succeed, he will remain focused and refuse to be diverted.

We admire this extremely self-disciplined lifestyle when we see these dedicated people achieve great accomplishments. During the Olympic games (held every four years), dedicated young men and women travel from around the world to compete with others who have worked and lived in a similar manner. The whole world watches and waits with anticipation to see who will be the "best".

Why is it that we assume that the "training" of a child in the ways of God requires less than this single-minded dedication? Is not the purpose of training our children more serious than any athlete's goal? Does eternity count more than a few moments of glory on a field before the eyes of the world?

To "train" a child (whether your physical baby or a spiritual one), you must understand how serious and important your work is. Then, you will dedicate your life to making sure that those you teach catch your devotion and dedication. This is accomplished by the consistent practice of two things:

1. Separation from the evil influences of this world.
2. Constant instruction in godly conduct—found daily in God's Word.

As leaders/teachers of our children and newborns in Christ, we must be careful to "train" and not just "teach."

Another meaning for the Hebrew root word for "train" is to "cultivate a taste for." A failure to "train" in this manner can cause our children to desire things other than God and His ways. This is like getting your children to eat vegetables instead of sweet biscuits. What do you place in their hands when they ask for something to eat? What do they see you eating?

It is up to us as parents (both spiritual and physical) to show them, with our lives and

choices, that following God is the “sweetest” life possible. “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psalms 34:8). After they have personally experienced the goodness of God (they have “tasted” for themselves), they will want more and more. When children follow the example of their leaders, and they discover that God is *good*, they will continue this dedication throughout their lives.

Discipline in the Sunday School Class

Discipline is *not* punishment! This point must be clear. Discipline is “control,” not “force.” As a dedicated Christian educator, we must strive to use every means to keep our children involved and interested. This will remove most of our major discipline problems. Why? Because leadership, inside or outside of the classroom, is simply *influence*. When you influence your students in a proper manner, your problems decrease.

Thanks to Sis. Barbara Westberg for her session on “Discipline” in the seminars she taught in West Africa. Here are some of her ideas about Sunday school discipline.

1. Do not expect adult behavior out of younger students.
 - Children will pay attention for a short time (approximately one minute per year of age). This is talking about their ability to listen, not play. They may look like they are listening, but they are not.
 - God gave all children, of every race and tongue, a built-in need to move. They cannot sit still for long. This is true for adults too, even though they can sit still for a longer period of time. If they are not interested or doing something, they will fall asleep.
2. With a little extra effort, you can make the lesson exciting and interesting by using *surprise* and *variety*.
3. Let your students be a part of the lesson as much as possible.
 - Give the lesson back to the students by allowing them to take part. It is for them, isn't it?
 - Look for things that interest your students, and allow them to do those things, if possible. Many times, students are hard to manage because they are bored or need to feel like they are a part of the class.
4. Be sure you are the first one in the class area.
 - If you are late, you will lose control of the activity.

- The student who arrives first will be telling everyone what to do, even if he does not know himself.
5. Always be WELL PREPARED.
 - Blank spots in the lesson where nothing is happening invite trouble.
 - Your purpose is to teach the class, so be sure you do not visit with others. Concentrate on the lesson and your students.
 6. Student involvement means movement and action on their part.
 - This means that your students will be talking more, moving around, and not sitting perfectly still. This is good, as long as you are still in control of the action or activity.
 - The purpose of Christian education is not to keep students quiet, but to lead them to *know* and *do* God's will.
 - If the activity becomes too loud, change it. You can do this by using a prearranged signal, such as a choir director would use at the end of a song.
 7. Occasionally, change the arrangement of the class area.
 - If you are holding your class under a tree, change the direction the students are looking.
 - If you are blessed with benches or chairs, change them to form a U-shape or L-shape, and design a learning activity to go with the new class shape. There are two very good reasons for this new arrangement of things:
 1. To keep the students from poking and teasing the ones sitting in front of them.
 2. To give the teacher eye contact with every student.
 - If you are not blessed with chairs or benches, use this freedom to have students sit in any formation you want, fitting to the story you are teaching.
 - If you are in a building (room), move the chairs/benches so they have their backs against the wall, or form two lines facing each other, like two teams.
 - Inside a room, try to arrange the seats so the students' backs are to the door/window, so that outside distractions do not disturb them.
 8. Try your best to use positive statements, even when making a correction in student behavior.
 - It takes ten to twelve positive comments to repair the damage caused by one negative comment.
 - Even when administering a reprimand, Jesus made sure His students knew the reward for right behavior. This is a good principle to practice.

9. Avoid the use of a cane or stick in the Sunday school class.

- Some cultures make frequent use of a bamboo (or other type of wooden) cane for class discipline. This is the method employed in secular classes in many developing countries, and it carries over to the Sunday school.
- While the Bible does speak about using the “rod of correction” to drive mischief from the heart of a child (Proverbs 22:15), it is speaking to parents. That does not mean that teachers should never use the “rod.” However, if parents have properly applied this “rod of correction” at home, teachers and other caregivers will not have to consider it.
- The “rod” should be a last resort in a Sunday school class. This simply means that you should try every other suggestion of correction before using the “rod.” Here are some good suggestions to help you maintain control, without resorting to the “rod of correction.”

Here are some suggestions to use before bringing out the “rod”:

- While still talking to the class, walk over to the student who is causing trouble. Place your hand on the student’s shoulder to get his attention. Many times, this reminder that you are watching is enough to correct the wrong behavior.
- If this is not enough, call the student by name and include him in the context of the lesson. “Do you remember what happened next, Kwadwo?”
- If both of these efforts do not work, move the student to a different seat, but in a non-threatening way. “Kwadwo, would you come up here and help me lead this song?” When the song has finished, say something like, “That was nice, Kwadwo. Please sit right here on the front so you can help me when we sing that song again.”
- If behavior is still a problem, take the student aside and talk to him.
 - Find out what is bothering him.
 - Let him know that his behavior is not acceptable.
 - Take care of the matter yourself. It only undermines your authority if you call in the pastor or Sunday school director to handle a discipline problem.
 - Never threaten a student. If you speak of a consequence for wrong behavior, be sure that you are capable of doing it. And be sure you *do it*, if he continues to act incorrectly. This will cause the students to respect your word. Threats to call the

pastor, or mention of God's judgment, will only cause the student to mistrust both God and the pastor.

- Make sure that the consequences for wrong behavior are not too strong for the offense.

CONCLUSION

With any type of training, discipline is a *must!* This involves both self-discipline and discipline by the person in charge of the training (parent, coach, or instructor). With a proper dedication to training students in God’s ways, and a proper understanding of what this “training” involves, we will not have a problem with discipline. It will become a vital part of our students' lives, and will lead them safely across the finish line into heaven!

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Why do so many places in the world use a cane for discipline in the Sunday school?

2. What type of discipline is a *must* in any training process? _____

3. What is discipline? List four (4) things.

4. What are some things that discipline is *not*? _____

5. What is the difference in “training” and “teaching”? _____

LESSON 16
**Getting God's Word Into
"Headquarters"**

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment"
(Matthew 22:37-38).

FOCUS: To get God's Word into our students' minds, we need to understand how they learn. What they have in their minds determines how they think, feel, and act. For God to be in control, we must put His Word in their headquarters.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Control of man has been an issue from the beginning. God made man in His image and gave him the ability to choose. God was not interested in creating robots. He wanted humans who would love and serve Him because they wanted Him to control their lives. God told Adam about the good things that were his to enjoy. But He also gave him one warning, and He meant what He said.

The devil was there, as he is today, doing his best to take control. He knew that if he could gain control of man's choices, he could rule him. He set out to control man's "headquarters."

Over a hundred years ago, John Bunyan wrote a book called "The Holy War." In his book, Bunyan told of an evil being (called Diabolus) who wanted to gain control of the town of "Mansoul." Mansoul was surrounded by a strong wall that had five gates, the eye-gate, the ear-gate, the smell-gate, the touch-gate and the taste-gate. Diabolus could not tear down the wall. To get control of "Mansoul," he needed to get inside the city. How would he do this? By persuading the gatekeeper to open the gates! How could he do this? Diabolus tempted the gatekeeper to see, hear, smell, touch, and taste appealing things. He used the gatekeeper's five senses to tempt him. When the gatekeeper opened the gates (his five senses), Diabolus moved in and took over Mansoul's headquarters. Thus, he gained control of the city. The story of Eden is similar. Satan enticed Eve with her five senses.

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (She opened her ear-gate when she listened to the serpent. *"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; But of the fruit of the tree which is in the*

midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, (She opened her eye-gate when she looked at the fruit.) she took of the fruit thereof, (The touch-gate opened.) and did eat, (She opened the taste-gate.) and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:1-6).

It is interesting to note that Adam also opened his ear-gate, then his eye-gate, his touch-gate, and finally his taste-gate. Genesis 3:6 says that Adam was "with her" when Eve decided to eat the forbidden fruit. Was he there all the time? We don't read that Adam conversed with the serpent himself, so this lets me know that I don't have to be the one doing the actual communicating with the devil. If I do not resist, if I do not flee from his lies, I can fall into his traps. When the devil gains control of "headquarters" he forces me to do things his way. If I will learn to resist him, he will flee from me.

God created man with five gates to his mind. He designed him specifically so that he could feel, see, touch, taste, and hear. But, He wanted him to guard his senses and allow only things to enter his mind that give God control of headquarters. But, God never forced man to do this. He gave man the power to choose what he put in his mind. The devil used the very thing created by God for man's good to deceive and trick Eve into sinning against the Creator who had formed her.

The first and greatest commandment is that we submit all (heart, soul, strength and mind) to God—that we love Him with all our being. Three of the Gospel writers (those writing about the life of Jesus on earth) mentioned this. It must be important.

"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

God will not force anyone to give Him control. It

must be a matter of choice—a free-will decision. This is one reason why it is so important that we educate (teach) Christians about God’s will and ways. Our students must know what God is like. They need to understand their power to make decisions and realize the consequences of their choices. We have a job to do. The best way to get that job done is to use the same plan that Diabolus, in the story of “The Holy War,” and the serpent in Eden used—open the gates to “headquarters.”

Unless we are physically handicapped (blind, mute, deaf), we have five gates that control access to our minds. All knowledge comes into our minds (headquarters) through these five senses. What we see, hear, smell, touch and taste determines what we learn. Whether the knowledge is good or bad, it enters our minds through these gates. Our minds are the headquarters of our soul. What is put in our minds decides our eternal salvation or destruction. This holds true no matter where we live, what language we speak, or what our culture dictates. The five senses are the gates to our minds.

1. **The EAR-GATE** is used most often in teaching. We tell stories, repeat the news, give instructions, and make music. If we are not careful, the ear-gate will be the only one we use. As we lecture, the devil will slip in one of the other gates and gain control of our students' minds. We cannot just use one gate. We must use all of them to gain access of our students' minds and put Jesus in headquarters.

2. **The EYE-GATE** is powerful. What we see stays with us a lot longer than what we hear. If I tell you about the first time I ever saw a baby being born in Africa, you might be interested. I can talk about how dark it was without any light except a lantern. I can tell you how frightened I was when the mother began to bleed profusely. I can describe how it felt when the nurse placed the newborn baby in my arms and told me to hold it—there was another baby trying to come. I was there. I saw it all happen, and I do not even have to close my eyes to live it again. The eye-gate is powerful, because images stay with us a lot longer than spoken words. So, try to open the eye-gate when you tell a Bible story. Do not just tell it; show it.

3. **The TOUCH-GATE** is opened by more than what we feel with our fingers. We touch with our cheek, nose, feet and toes—any part of our skin. We can feel with our emotions too. If someone cries, we feel it. If someone laughs, we might laugh too. If someone becomes angry, we feel emotion. When someone touches us, they are sending a message. There is power in touch.

4. **The SMELL-GATE** is the one most closely connected to our memory. It is probably the one that is opened least in our teaching. As teachers, we should do our best to create a smell that relates to the lesson. It could be remembered longer than the whole lecture.

5. **The TASTE-GATE** is the most difficult to use, but is powerful also. The Bible tells us to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalms 34:8). Did David mean that we were supposed to take a “bite” of God? No! He was talking about a feeling, a knowledge of the things of God. Truth makes us feel as satisfied spiritually as we do physically when we eat something that we like. Sometimes, we have to try it to believe that it is good. But this sense is important in our lives (food is a vital part of *everyone’s* life) and should be used whenever possible in our teaching.

CONCLUSION

- We remember 10% of what we hear (1 gate).
- We remember 50% of what we hear and see (2 gates).
- We remember 70% of things that we hear, see, and speak (3 gates).
- We remember 90% of things that we hear, see, speak, and do (4 gates).

These statistics are only a small part of the evidence supporting the importance of opening the gates of our students' minds. It is important that we use all five of these gates when teaching so that God can control headquarters. We cannot allow the devil to use his tricks on us. We have to beat him at his own game. We want our students to hear God’s Word and see God’s glory all around them. They need to touch God and be touched by Him, to smell the sweet aroma of His presence, to send up sweet-smelling prayers to Him, and to taste His goodness. We want God to control the headquarters of our students of all ages. This happens when the five gates of the senses are opened and the Word of God is put in the mind.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Where is the “headquarters” of the soul?

2. What is the means, created by God in every human, which gives access to the control of man's soul? _____

LESSON 17
*The Same Old Thing
A Brand New Way*

*“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe”
(Philippians 3:1).*

FOCUS: God is the author of creativity (Genesis 1:1). He is the only one who has ever made something entirely new from nothing. When God made the first man, He *breathed* into his nostrils the “*breath of life*” (Genesis 2:7). His creativity did not stop there. He has placed in each of us the spark (breath) that gives us the inspiration we need to take what is available and make something exciting and beneficial from it. Let God *inspire* you.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

In the beginning, God started the exciting adventure called “creativity.” Since that time, men have been “inspired” to “create.” Actually, they took something that God had *created* and found a different or more functional use for it. Where did they get their ideas? God *breathed* on them. We call this “God-breathed,” *inspiration, or creativity* (or anointing). All come from the same word as “breath, Spirit, wind.”

How are we “born again”? How can we become “new creations in Christ Jesus”? By the same creative process, God breathes into man His Spirit, and man becomes a new creature.

“There came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:2)

Note the reference to a wind from God—His creativity in action. The old Peter who denied his relationship with Jesus Christ was gone for good. In his place was a new man—one who was bold and unashamed to proclaim the saving mercy of a mighty God. He was not just a changed man. He was a new creation. God “breathed” and created a new man. He is still doing that.

Even after we have become “new creatures” in Christ Jesus, this “God-breathed” inspiration comes to us again and again and gives us the spark of creativity we need. What God began in the Garden of Eden, and what He did at Pentecost, He is continuing in our lives. As we endeavor to reach, teach and keep souls, we need more of this “God-breathed” spark. Without it, we will do what we have always done with the same results

(or lack of results). New converts fall away, because we lack the inspiration to teach them how to find answers for their needs in God’s Word. We need to do spend more time seeking this God-breathed inspiration. No more excuses that we do not have the materials, equipment, supplies, facilities, or anything else! God has given us what we need, but we must start *now* to use it. His divine inspiration will help us find a way. His “creativity” in us will accomplish what no facility or material could ever do. Creativity gives us a vehicle to cross the chasm between the students and God’s message that will meet those needs.

Can I Be Creative?

You sure can. Every one of God’s creatures has the ability to be creative. Every man, woman, boy or girl can use what is around them to create something beautiful, fun, or useful. We are made in the image of God—the original Creator. Do you think God was in a serious mood when He created the lovable and funny monkey? Was He thinking about work and toil when He created the lily of the field? What about the orange tree? It is not only beautiful, with a fragrance beyond compare when in full bloom; it is one of the most nutritious and useful fruits. It came with the seed already inside the fruit to grow more orange trees. Talk about an imagination—God truly was blessed with one. He did not leave out this part of Himself when He made us. His design was complete, and it included creativity. So, let’s get started.

How Do I Begin Being Creative?

To spark creativity, remind yourself of your God-given gifts. You do not have to have a college degree to take a small milk tin and make a toy motor. However, you *do* have to have an imagination. Turn on your imagination, and let it soar.

What Next?

The key to creativity is to live your life as one great adventure. Everything has possibilities, and you are out exploring—looking for them. Do not study new ideas in a critical way, but search for their potential. Try to find ways to change what is available into something fresh and different. Do not be afraid. Fear is a crippler of creativity. So what if it has never been done “that way”? Unless it is biblically *wrong*, try it out and see if it will work. If it does not produce the result you are looking for, check to see if the result is still beneficial in some other way. This will change the way you look at everything—especially the way you educate the souls God has placed in your care.

How Will Creativity Help Me?

Our world is constantly changing. The church experiences many changes as it continually grows. These things make creativity a necessity—not a choice. We should learn how to use our “God-breathed inspiration” to present His never-changing gospel in ways that today’s world will hear and obey.

When we are creative, the learning process never stops. We will learn from young and old alike. Then we, in turn, teach those who follow us to use creative methods to continue learning.

When we, as teachers, are creative, our students *enjoy* being in our classes. We speak, move and live with a freshness and vitality that is contagious and inspiring. Do you really enjoy being around someone who is so predictable that you know exactly what they are going to do and say in every given situation? Is it not a lot more fun to be with someone who is always surprising you, someone who uses his imagination, and speaks from the heart with new ideas and thoughts? Jesus was like that. He used some of the same methods (such as parables) for teaching throughout His ministry, but he was never *predictable!* The disciples, and even the Pharisees never knew, what Jesus was going to do next, or what He was going to use to help them learn. We call this element of creativity *surprise*. In a learning situation, this is a valuable tool. Use it to make learning interesting and fun.

CONCLUSION

For too long, Christian education has been tagged as “boring, too long, hard, not worth the effort.” It is time for us to wake up to the God-given gifts inside us and begin *creating* something. Granted, we cannot make something out of nothing, but we have so many things available. After all, if we are made in the image of God, there is something inside of us just waiting to come out – that element of surprise that will help us express God’s glorious truth to others.

While learning to be more creative, we must never change God’s Word. His Word does not need to be changed or helped to add excitement. It is complete. While we should be creative in the way we *present* His Word (the methods we use), we must never change the message.

The same God who created us made the glorious eagle and the tiny sparrow. He made the magnificent elephant and the tiny mouse that can scare the elephant into a stampede! We need to explore the possibilities of our imagination and be creative. God began by placing the spark of creativity in each of us. Let’s set the fire ablaze!

1. Who is the author of creativity? _____

2. What are some other words that come from the same root word as “creativity”? _____

3. Who can be creative? _____

4. How do we know that we can be creative?

5. Where does creativity begin? _____

6. What is the key to creativity?

7. What are at least three (3) benefits of being creative? _____

8. What element of creativity is a valuable tool in any learning situation? _____

9. What should *never* be changed while we are being creative? _____

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

LESSON 18

Write for Life

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”

(John 20:31).

FOCUS: Now that our eyes are open to God’s plan for Christian education, we need to write our lessons for the benefit of others. The spoken word is good. Children enjoy hearing family stories. But, with something as serious as their eternal destiny, we cannot take chances. We must keep good records. Then, we need to tell our stories over and over from the written record. With every family story and testimony, we need to share from God’s Word His promises and plan for us. We do not want to lose the testimony of God’s greatness because we have forgotten.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

In our key verse, John, the beloved apostle of Jesus, tells us why he found it necessary to write what Jesus did and said:

- That we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God
- That our belief might give us eternal life through His name

Our purpose for writing has not changed. We may not be writing words inspired by God as Holy Scripture, but we need to write to help people understand who Jesus is and find eternal life. This writing is *very important*. Why?

Over and over in God’s Word, we read a sad story. It goes something like this:

- God’s people (for whatever reason) forgot to tell their children stories about God’s laws and His protection.
- The generation that first experienced these things died.
- The new generation had no idea of what God had already done, or what He wanted them to do.
- God’s laws were forgotten, and God’s people were destroyed.

This pattern is repeated in many places in scripture, especially in Judges:

- Judges 2:8-10
- Judges 2:16-19
- Judges 3:7-8
- Judges 3:12-14

- Judges 4:1-3
- Judges 6:1-6
- Judges 8:33-35
- Judges 10:6-10
- Judges 13:1
- I Samuel 2:12-25; 27-36

One of the saddest examples of this trend by God’s people (forgetting God as soon as their leaders were dead) is found in Judges 17 and 18.

Chapter 17 begins with the story of a young man named Micah, who had stolen his mother’s silver. When she looked for it, cursing the one who had taken it, Micah confessed. She told him that she had planned to make him graven images (idols) and set up a place of worship to these “gods.” What a sad situation—a mother actually building idols for her son! But the story gets worse.

A young Levite (the tribe of priests in Israel) traveled away from home looking for work. He happened to stop in Micah’s home and was hired to be the priest for these idols. Then, in chapter 18, when the tribe of Dan went looking for a place to stay, they passed by the home of Micah. They saw his idols and his hired priest. On their return trip, they decided to see if they could persuade the priest to leave Micah’s house, and become their priest—to more idols—for their entire tribe. The priest, whose name was Jonathan, thought this was a good idea, so he stole Micah’s idols, and left with the tribe of Dan (Judges 18:18-20).

This story is sad enough in itself, but verse 30 causes us to wonder.

“And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.”

Do you remember who Gershom was? He was the first-born son of Moses, the man who led Israel out of the land of Egypt. This Levite who was happy to be a priest to idols was Gershom’s son, the grandson of Moses!

All of the miracles that God did in Egypt meant nothing to Jonathan (Exodus 7:8-24; chapters 8-12). The crossing of the Red Sea was not important (Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-31). The wondrous signs in the wilderness for forty years made no difference: water from a rock (Exodus 17:1-7), manna from heaven (Exodus 16:1-36), and fiery serpents (Deuteronomy 21:5-9). The Ten Commandments, given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, were blatantly ignored, especially the second commandment against graven images:

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or

that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:4-5).

Even the conquering of Canaan did not show Moses' grandson who the one true God really was. He *knew not* God, neither the things that He had done. What a terrible waste!

How did this happen? Why did the family of one of the greatest leaders of all time serve idols? There can only be one explanation for this, and it is found in the book of Judges, in two different places.

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes"(Judges 17:6; Judges 21:25).

It does not take a long time for the things of God and His ways to be lost in a family, or even a nation. Immediately after the death of Joshua, and the men who had seen and known the ways of the Lord, God's ways were forgotten. If this can happen to leaders as great as Joshua and Moses, why do we not believe it can happen to us? It *can*, and it *will*, if we are not careful to pass the faith along to those who are coming behind us.

We need to write in order to keep our most precious gifts safe:

- Our heritage.
- Our message (faith).
- Our descendants.

In order to preserve our heritage (the past) and our descendants (the future) we must preserve our faith. One of the best ways to do this is through the written word. We are not writing the Bible, but we should be keeping a written record of the wonderful things that God has done, and is doing in His church. We *must* keep a record of our testimonies, and we *must* make sure that we have God's ways and His will written down in a language that our children can understand and obey. The written word is not easily changed, and difficult to forget, so write it for future generations. This will require extra effort on our part, but is well worth it.

Requirements for Writing

Many people are afraid to write, because they think that a college/university education is required. There are many excuses, such as "I am not a good speaker, so I can't write," but they are only excuses. If you are able to talk to your family or friends, you are able to write. As Rev. Jim

Poitras has stated in his Africa Aflame guidelines, "Writing is simply talk written down." You may be old or young, rich or poor, and you can write. It matters not if you are from a small village or a large city. Writing is talking on paper. You do not need to be a pastor to write your lessons. All you need to be is someone who wants to make sure that future generations know and remember God and His works.

God's Word makes it clear that writing was an important part of sharing the truth, and making sure that those who come after us know and believe in God and His ways.

"This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD" (Psalms 102:18).

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

When Paul was writing to the church, he spent a good deal of time talking about the experiences of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. Their mistakes were used as a warning and guide for the new church at Corinth:

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:11-13)

Some things are necessary before you can write lessons for Christian education:

- A willingness to study God's Word seriously.
- A desire to learn more about writing skills.
- A creative, open mind and heart.
- A life sensitive to the moving of God's Spirit.
- A disciplined lifestyle.

You may not have all of these requirements right now, but if you are willing and anxious to work for them, you too can write. A willing vessel is the greatest instrument God uses. He is always looking for more vessels to fulfill His purpose and plan. Do you want to join His army of witnesses? Start writing *now*.

How Do I Begin?

Creativity is the foundation that makes writing interesting. We have already learned (in Lesson 17) that creativity began with God. It is actually the "spirit of the Creator," or the "breath of God."

Another way of saying this is "inspiration." When God breathes on us and inspires us with His Spirit, we call this "anointing." We will never create something from nothing, as God did. However, the anointing will bless us with new ideas about old stories, and God will move with us and through us.

When God created man, He made his brain in a special way. The right side controls man's creativity and is the dominant worker in artistic people such as artists, musicians, writers and other artistic folks. The left side of the brain handles all the critical, analytical thinking done by man and is evident in people such as accountants, engineers, computer experts, and editors.

However, God designed our brain so that both sides (the creative right side and the critical left side) do not work well together. We use either one or the other, not both at the same time. So, when you are writing your lessons. Do not worry about the grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, (mechanics of writing)—just write. Use your creativity and let it flow. You can go back later and fix all of the mistakes and mechanics. Or you can even get someone else to take your creative work and check it critically.

There is another way to look at the way we are made. In a spiritual sense, when we are critical of things (the lesson we have been assigned, the deadline for completing the lesson, our leaders), we stop the flow of the Spirit, and our creativity is destroyed. True creativity is when God's Spirit moves and gives us fresh and exciting ways to capture the attention of students and present the lesson in such a way that they will never forget it. If we want to be creative, we must stay in touch with the Creator. Only with prayer and fresh anointing, can we write life-changing lessons.

Sensitivity is a very important part of writing. Sensitivity actually means what it sounds like—using the senses to make writing more interesting. This includes what you see, feel, hear, smell and taste. If you know what it means to "taste" the agony of defeat, when you write about it, this knowledge will shine through. How about "feeling" the sting of someone's anger? If you have experienced this, you will write about it more clearly.

The sensitivity needed when writing for Christian education comes from experiencing God and life with our senses. We are "sensitive" to God's voice. We feel His touch. We experience all sorts of emotions, and these are needed for good writing. We must have time with God, and our experiences with Him must be fresh and new every day. It is

necessary to have a "now" relationship with God if we want to minister to others as we write.

As writers, we have to develop our sensitivity muscles. They must be used daily. This, in turn, helps us develop our creativity. It makes a lot of difference in the way someone writes if they have a sensitive heart and ear to the things of God.

We must also be sensitive to the needs of our readers. That does not mean that we write to please them. It does, however, mean that we keep our senses tuned into the things we hear them talk about, the things our eyes tell us about them, and the way they respond to those around them. Then, with direction from the Word of God and prayer, we will write in a way that will help them.

Self-discipline is the third part of writing preparation. The word "dedicate" comes from the same root word as "train." We must train our minds and hearts to focus on God's Word as we endeavor to write something that will be a blessing in His kingdom. To train ourselves to write like this, we need to take note of some facts about the writing:

- Writing is hard work. It takes time, patience, and a great deal of study and research to write something that will benefit others.
- The flesh gets in the way. Even when the anointing of God is on us, and the words are flowing, there will be interruptions, distractions, and all sorts of things to discourage our efforts to write. We must learn to persevere—no matter what gets in the way. This does not mean to ignore the needs of your family. However, it does mean to keep your mind focused on your work as much as possible, and do not allow the normal distractions of life stop you from writing.
- Writing is lonely work. Many times, you will be writing while others are enjoying themselves. It is also impossible to see the person who will be reading/using your written work. This can make it more difficult to actually write something helpful. Learn to put one person in your mind and write the lesson for him. Remember how you felt when you saw him. Visualize him sitting before you and write to meet his needs.
- The rewards of writing are few, and slow in coming. Most of the time there is no money. It may take a long time for your work to be printed, and then, only a few people may ever read it.

Do not allow these facts to discourage you from writing. Now that you know they are a part of the work, just accept them, and keep on writing.

Discipline involves our entire lives. Develop the habit of asking questions about everything you see, hear or read. Why? How? When? Why not? These are good questions to use all the time.

Many people are both creative and sensitive, but not disciplined. It takes all three ingredients to make a well-balanced writer. We *must* write, because the need is so great, and the prize is so important. The souls of people of all ages depend on it!

What About the Lesson?

Remember these things when writing a lesson for Christian education:

- Focus on God. When writing a story about Daniel in the lion's den, we are really writing about the God who delivered Daniel. When writing about Moses and the burning bush, the hero is the great and mighty miracle-working God of Moses. God is always the main character – no matter what the story.
- God is ALWAYS the hero. Be careful when writing about the devil. He is the loser and should always be portrayed as such.
- Keep it simple. It is important that we communicate our message to the readers. This is not done with fancy phrases that have to be looked up in the dictionary. Our writing needs to be short and profound, like:
I love you.
HELP!
Wet paint.
Whatever we have to say should be said in as few words as possible. The goal of writing is to help both teacher and student understand.
- Keep on the right track. God's Word has so many wonderful points and references. Be careful to stay on the subject (whatever it is) and keep Jesus as the focus. We cannot possibly cover every area of a verse/passage, so we should focus on the lesson aim.
- Write for the age level assigned. The way we write changes drastically with the age of our students. If we are writing for the preschool age, we should find some children this age and watch them at play. Listen to their conversations, and see how they talk to each other. If we are writing for a group of young people, visit a school campus, or attend youth meetings at church and observe the way these students communicate with one another. This

will be a great help in meeting their needs when we write.

CONCLUSION

Just like every other work that we do for God, writing lessons for Christian education is basically *work*. It may seem to come easier for some people than others, but all go through the same procedures. We may never be famous, but if we help one soul to know God, it will be worth it all.

- Keep on trying (discipline yourself).
- Let God breathe on you (develop creativity).
- Listen to God's voice (be sensitive) as He leads you in this work.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. What is the foundation that makes all writing interesting? _____

2. Who are the two (2) different groups (people) we need to be sensitive to? _____

3. What are four (4) facts about writing that could hinder our discipline? _____

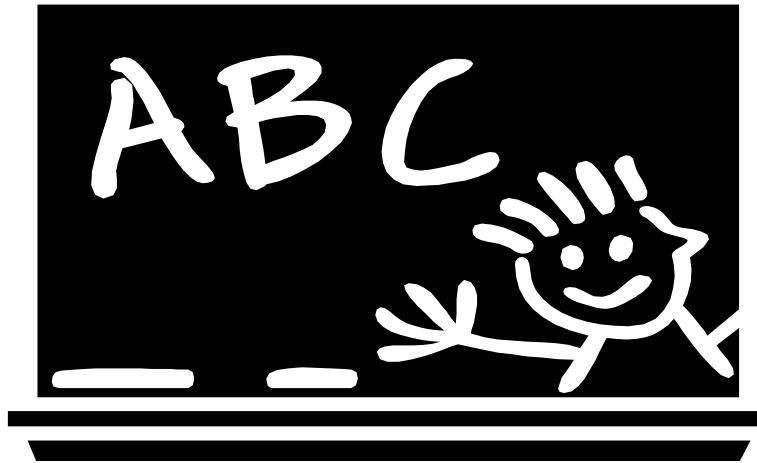
4. List the five (5) points to remember when you begin writing a lesson. _____

5. What are the three (3) precious gifts that our writing will help to preserve? _____

6. Give one (1) example (with scripture reference) of how a lack of the written Word of God caused the spiritual downfall of a family. _____

LESSON OUTLINE

Title



Key Scripture Passage

Memory Verse

Spotlight on Doctrine (Lesson Aim)

Introduction

Bible Story

Conclusion

Reinforce the Lesson

Activity

Review Questions

Extended Session

(Getting Acquainted with the Bible)

cCHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SAMPLE LESSON

(Beginner Level)

TITLE – “GOD is my Father . . . and He is ONE!”

KEY SCRIPTURES: Matthew 6:28-30; Ephesians 4:6; Malachi 2:10

MEMORY VERSE: “*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?*” (Mal. 2:10 a-b)

LESSON AIM: Make the students aware that God, our Father, and the creator of all things, loves us, and will take care of us.

INTRODUCTION: (If possible, have a loaf of bread at the front of the class. If you know how many students will be in the class, try to have enough so that each student can have one piece of bread at the end of the lesson.)

Take a census of your students as they arrive in class:

- ❖ How many of you had bread and tea for breakfast this morning?
- ❖ How many had an orange or mango or pineapple?
- ❖ How many had porridge?
- ❖ How many had nothing yet?

Who gave you the breakfast that you had? Was it your mother, father, grandmother, sister, or auntie? Are you sure?

God’s book (the Bible) tells us that we all have the same father. What does this mean? Does your papa look like mine? Is your papa still living? Some of you no longer have a father that is alive, or maybe you have never even seen your father. What does the Bible mean?

Those who had bread and tea for breakfast, please stand up. Who made the bread for you? Did mother buy it in the market or on the side of the street? Your bread was probably made in a bakery, somewhere in the city, right? What ingredients did they use to make that bread? Flour? Salt? Bread fat (shortening or butter)? Water or milk? Where did these things come from? (Encourage students to give answers to all questions.)

Flour, salt, bread fat, water, and milk are all things made by God:

- ❖ Flour comes from wheat (a plant that grows out of the ground).
- ❖ Salt is found in the ocean and in the ground.
- ❖ Bread fat comes from animals or plants.
- ❖ All water comes from God.
- ❖ Milk comes from a cow, goat, or sheep.

Every ingredient in the foods we mentioned had to come from something that only God can make. This is what the Bible was talking about when it said that we all have one father.

BIBLE LESSON: *The teacher should have a flower (or if possible, a bunch of flowers) picked this morning on the way to church, or yesterday, in preparation for class. If flowers are available in the place you are having Sunday School, a better plan would be to have the students go around and find a flower, and bring it back to the class area. Call one student to the front of the class, and have him/her hold the flower in a cup/glass of water so that all the students can see. Act like you are talking to the flower directly, and say something like this:*

“Good morning Little Flower. You sure are dressed up in a beautiful cloth this morning!” (Teacher should very gently touch the petals and leaves of the flower.)

“Did your mother make that dress for you?” (Turn to the class and ask, “Do flowers have a mother?”)

“Where did she find such a beautiful color?” (Ask the class how a flower gets its pretty color.) “How long did it take her to make your dress?” (Did the flower grow overnight, or did it take some years/months/weeks/days for it to become so pretty?)

“Did you design your dress, or did your mother choose the style?” (*Is it possible for a flower to think, plan, and make something for itself?*)

By now, the students should be giggling at such a funny notion that a flower has on a dress, or that a flower has a mother who makes its clothes. But who DOES make the flower so very beautiful? Who decides what it will look like every day when it is so beautiful and smells so sweet? Does anyone in the class know who made this flower’s colorful design?

That’s right. . . God did it! The Bible (*God’s book*) tells us the story of how God made everything. He is the Father of everything that we see and know. He made each one of us, and He told us not to worry about things, because He loves us so much that He will take care of us.

If God loves the little flower so much that He makes it beautiful every day, do you think He loves you? The flower cannot talk. It doesn’t think or plan. It doesn’t even know why or how it grows. God takes care of everything for His special creation.

Look at yourself. Did you make the clothes you are wearing this morning? Did your mother make them? Where did she get the cloth? Did she weave the cloth? Did she grow the material used to make the cloth (cotton from a plant, silk from a worm, wool from a sheep)?

- ❖ Choose one student and bring him/her to the front of the class.
- ❖ Let them show all the other students their shoes.
- ❖ Try to decide what materials were used in making the shoes.
- ❖ List them for the students.

What about your shoes? Where did they come from? Did your Papa buy your shoes? Did he make them himself? What material was used to make these shoes (*leather, plastic, or cloth*)? Where did the material come from? Did your Papa make this material? Where did he find it? (*They will probably answer, “in the market”.*)

You see, God has been taking care of you in many ways that you did not even think about.

- ❖ Plastic is made from a substance that God designed.
- ❖ Rubber grows on a tree.
- ❖ Leather comes from the skin of animals like cows, goats, and camels (*sometimes even snakes and lizards*).
- ❖ Who made these animals? Can you make one?

Even the shoes you are wearing show that God is taking care of you. He loves you very much.

CONCLUSION: Isn’t it time that we understand who our Father really is? Don’t you want to thank Him for all the ways He is taking care of you every day? Let’s close our eyes, and bow our heads, and pray this prayer together. You should repeat the words after I say them:

**Dear God, we are thankful that YOU are our Father.
Help us to know that you are taking care of us - ALL THE TIME!
Help us to remember that you love us,
...provide for us,
...and watch over us every day,
In every way.
In JESUS’ NAME,
Amen.**

REINFORCE THE LESSON: When you go home today, look around the place you live and see how many things you can find that had to come from God. You should look for things like:

- ❖ The place you sleep
- ❖ What materials were used to make your house?
- ❖ How many family members do you have? Brothers? Sisters? Aunties? Uncles? Grandparents?
- ❖ Do you use coal or wood for the fire in your kitchen?

Ask your mother/father where these things came from. If they tell you the market, ask them where the market sellers got them.

Remind your family that God is our Father, and He is the one who provides even the things we buy in the market.

MEMORY VERSE REVIEW: A good way to do this is with a “Memory Verse Choir”.

❖ Our Memory Verse has two parts and a Scripture reference.

1) Malachi 2:10 a-b

2) Have we not all one father?

3) Hath not one God created us?

- ❑ Divide the class into three groups. (Younger students are probably too shy to speak out individually, so working with groups gives them courage.)
- ❑ Name each section a different voice part (such as soprano for girls, tenor for boys, and bass for the Scripture Reference group).
- ❑ Repeat their portion of the verse with each group, several times.
- ❑ Give each group a chance to say their portion of the verse separately, while directing them as though you were their Choirmaster. The choirmaster should direct the verse, sometimes holding a word out a long time, and sometimes cutting the “choir” short.
- ❑ After following this procedure for two or three times, allow the groups to say their portion of the verse together, in proper order.
- ❑ Have each group say the entire verse (with Scripture reference).
- ❑ Choose one student (who is very good at saying the verse) as the choirmaster for the entire class.
- ❑ Finally, the entire class should say the verse together, in unison, as a choir would sing all voice parts in harmony.

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE BIBLE: Discuss the location of the memory verse. Be sure that you have your Bible in your hand as you talk about it.

- ❖ Turn to the different sections, and allow students to come to the front and hold the Bible for you as you move from place to place in its pages.
- ❖ This will help the students learn that the Bible is something they can touch and know how to use.
- ❖ Just like we divided our verse into sections/parts, the Bible is divided into two big parts. Can anyone tell me what those two parts are called? (Old Testament & New Testament)
- ❖ What does the first section talk about? (The beginning of everything, and the promise of a saviour)
- ❖ What does the second section talk about? (The promise is here, the church is born, and the promise is coming back one day)
- ❖ Where can you find the book of Malachi in the Bible? (Close to the middle of the book)
- ❖ Which section/division is it in? (At the end of the Old Testament - the first section)
- ❖ Who wrote the book of Malachi? (The prophet Malachi wrote down what God told him to.)
- ❖ Call for different volunteers to come to the front of the class and help them find the book of Malachi, using all the information that you have been discussing.
- ❖ Finally, let volunteers come to the front of the class and say the memory verse.

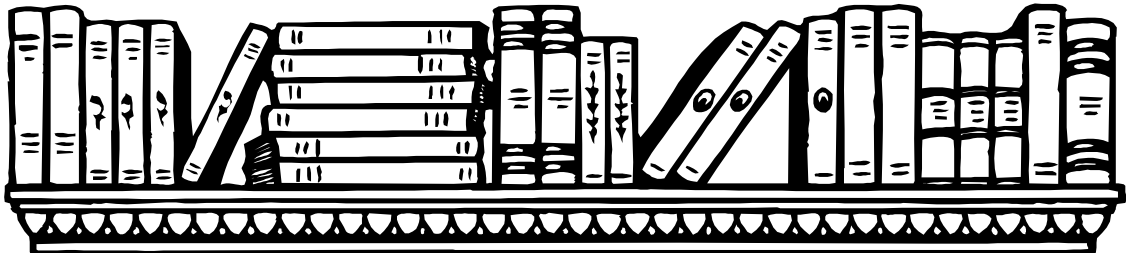
NOTE TO THE TEACHER;

This sample lesson is to help you with ideas for the methods you would use to teach a class of students in this age group. It is by no means the only way this lesson could be taught. Given the guidelines of the Christian Education text, you can choose any one of the styles suggested there to make this lesson one that your students will never forget. Pray about it, study God’s Word, and let His creativity flow in your heart and life.

God Bless You!

Sis. Linda Poitras, Author of *Christian Education MDS*

SUGGESTES *SUGGESTED* READING



1. Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at Church and How to Fix It, Thom & Joani Schultz (Group Publishing; Loveland, Colorado; 1996).
2. Come Ye Children, C. H. Spurgeon (Christian Focus Publication; Scotland, Great Britain; 1994).
3. Teach With Success, Guy P. Leavitt (Standard Publishing; Cincinnati, Ohio; 1987).
4. Teaching Techniques, Evangelical Teacher Training Association.
5. Teaching That Works, Cliff Schimmels (Standard Publishing; Cincinnati, Ohio; 1999).
6. Teaching for Spiritual Growth - An Introduction to Christian Education, Perry G. Downs (Zondervan Publishing House; Grand Rapids, MI; 1994).
7. The 7 Laws of the Learner, Dr. Bruce Wilkerson (Multnomah Press - Walk Thru the Bible Ministries; Sisters, Oregon; 1992).
8. Color Outside the Lines, Howard Hendricks (Word Publishing; Nashville, TN; 1998).
9. Transitioning, Dan Southerland (Zondervan Publishing House; Grand Rapids, MI; 2000).
10. The Creativity Toolkit, H. James Harrington, Glen D. Hoffner, and Robert P. Reid Jr. (McGraw-Hill; New York; 1998).
11. Creative Bible Teaching, Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt (Moody Press; Chicago, IL; 1998).
12. The Ultimate Bible Guide For Children's Ministry, Karl Bastian, K. Christie Bowler, La Dona Hein, Jerry Hull, Rick Osborne, and Janet Teitsort (Group Publishing; Loveland, Colorado; 1999).

