

TEACHING THE LESSON

Mark 16:15 Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

One important thing to keep in mind when teaching the lesson is to be flexible. If you can see that the children are antsy, sitting and coloring or doing worksheets may not be the best approach. You may want to do something hands on. This is where having more planned than you need comes in handy. Also the children may plead to do an activity or song that you have done in the past. Be flexible. One thing that seems to happen every year is that someone will class will have experienced the death of a family member or neighbor. Be prepared to scrap your lesson plan and address the issue at hand. The first time this happened in my class, I prayed for help in comforting the child and using the class time to effectively teach about our assurance of God's grace and promise of heaven. It was helpful to have a Concordia study bible to be able to quickly look up passages pertaining to heaven.

Before class officially begins it is helpful to already have plans for those children who arrive early. If you make these fun, you will not have students show up late for class. The kids love to draw pictures on the board relating to our story.

Before we start our lesson we all meet in the church for a devotion with pastor, and singing together. It is a good idea to open and close each Sunday school lesson in prayer. Next I like to have a question to ask the children that will tie in to the story. One where everyone gets to answer. Example: What are you scared of? What makes you happy? How have you helped a friend? Etc. Next we review the past lesson. Then I like to do an introduction to the story usually with a prop. We go over the story next, stopping during the telling for discussion and application. Then we do an activity relating it to the story. Next we do memory work. If we have time we usually close with singing and the Lord's prayer.

Some churches have the teachers open with their own devotion and practice singing after class.

Reviewing the past story is important to help set the time frame. The new story fits into the last one, and lets the children know when and where the story takes place as far as Bible History.

It is helpful to have children sit facing the teacher and as close to the teacher as possible, not scattered around the room. We sometimes sit in a circle on floor. When using a flannel board the children gather around it on the floor.

You can introduce the lesson by pointing their attention to the picture on the front page of the student handout or workbook.

For older students you can start the lesson by asking the aim question and writing it on the board.

Read selected passages and ask questions for them to answer immediately after each group of passages.

Here is an example of an order to teach:

1. Seat the class
2. Take attendance
3. Gather the offering
4. Do memory work, some do this at the end. Some do this individually and others do this all together.
5. Opening devotion
6. Teach the lesson
7. Assign memory work
8. Do an activity
9. Closing prayer

Try to get the opportunity to praise each child every Sunday. It is nice to give out certificates that say a students was very helpful in class, participated well, etc.

It is a good goal for older students to try to produce independent Bible study students. Encourage them to bring their Bible every Sunday.

It is better to teach one application well than to skate over all of them. Don't short change this part. This is where the Bible truth becomes the child's truth.

Here is another example of an order to teach:

1. Opening devotion
2. Pray for God's guidance in studying His Word.
3. Recite or read together memory treasures... remind the class how they apply to us.
4. Review facts and truths from previous stories.
5. Provide background and vocabulary that will remove obstacles to understanding the lesson.

Practice telling the story out loud. Remember to have eye contact and voice changes. Retell the story using visuals, stop to comment or ask questions as appropriate.

For small children, begin with the same prayer each Sunday. Tell the children what to listen for.

For older children, have them locate the text in the bible and follow along. You can have those who wish to, take turns reading aloud. I would not make everyone read aloud, or you may have them skipping Sunday school.

Make sure they know the meaning of words.

Most teacher's books have questions leading up to the main point or aim. Discuss each part of the story and answer the questions as you go through the story from the Bible. Guide the students to get the answers you are looking for.

Every few weeks, give small rewards for attendance and for being good listeners of God's Word.

For small children, read the book "Ups and Downs, Grins and Frowns" to the class regularly before starting the lesson. It is available from NPH. It encourages children to choose proper behavior because of their love for Jesus, and His great love for them.

Be prepared to tell the story in your own words.

Some students have a hard time getting the answers down in writing and get lost to what you would have them learn as main points. Asking all students to speak the answers and then clarifying the correct answer helps everyone learn. You can rotate around the class including everyone. If someone has a problem answering a question, you can call on others who can help them with the answer, always being sure a correct understanding of the question and answer is heard by everyone.

Learn your students reading abilities. Assist with words that are hard for them to pronounce, but try to encourage all students to read a portion. I would let a person afraid to read aloud just say pass.

At all times try to make eye contact and keep all children involved with the class. Call them by name and ask some questions on what you have been discussing.

Use all the children's senses to take them back to the place and time and put them inside the story.

Bring in things to touch.

At the end of the lesson, go back and review the keypoints.

If you don't know the answer, tell them you will find out and let them know next week.

Have the children repeat the names of people and places.

Ask the students: What did you learn today? How will it change what you do this week?

Distinguish between law and gospel and apply it in Sunday school.

Teach a clear understanding of the meaning of justification and sanctification.

Use a set of Bible maps. One teacher wrote "I find it interesting to teach the setting of the story to help the students identify that these places in the bible are/were real places. I believe it helps to make this concrete by visually pointing this out as well."

For Advent use candle pictures, explaining each candle. Light it by adding a flame to a candle each Sunday.

Have pictures of continuing stories in a series. They would be used for review and help lead into the next story. The main point would be under each picture. When the main point was discovered by discussion it would be placed under the picture for that day.

As you get to the key points, write them on the board.

Flannel boards are fun for the smaller grades. You can buy kits of these. The children pay really close attention. Sometimes I let them hold the pieces for the story and as we tell story they get to come up and put them on the board. Sometimes I have the backgrounds already set up, and other times we discuss the setting and the children put up the background.

Sometimes we go around the room and say a nice thing about the person sitting next to us.

The children love to be in teams of boys vs. girls. Even the lower grades like this. We ask questions about the story and tally points. We take turns who gets the question, but if they miss the answer, the other team gets a chance. If you tell at the beginning of class that you are going to do this, you will be amazed at the attention level you get while telling the lesson.

For Solomon's temple one teacher brought gold mylar "curtains" and hung them all around the students enveloping them in the golden temple.

Yards and yards of unused fabric and a little sewing can go a long way in making children feel involved, as you dress them up as shepherds, wise men, prophets, and whoever else. Then they act out the story.

For Paul and his missionary journeys one teacher makes a huge map of the central and eastern Mediterranean region, and used toy boats and people for the children to "sail" to Paul's destinations.

On the chalkboard write the word of the day. The word has something to do with the days lesson and use the word and point to the board as much as you can during class time. One other thing to do, is before you write the word on the board have the kids try

to guess what the word of the day is, and if they get it, they get to write it on the board. You can give them clues or have them finish your first sentence when you use it for the first time.

You can turn the story into a play, complete with narrator parts.

One person tells the story and a helper draws on the white board the "mountain" or "lion" or whatever is pertinent to the story. The kids love it.

You can have the children pretend they are a reporter. Give them microphones and tell them to report the story as if they are there. This can be a lot of fun. Some kids even throw in a commercial. I have done this with 1st and 2nd graders.

The majority of teachers who contributed to this project said that they never give homework. Children may not want to attend class if they didn't get it done. Since the students are already in school five other days of the week, most do not like to do worksheets.

If you have discipline troubles with students, I like to have them help pass out papers and give them extra worksheets for class, or have them help another student.

For the story of Joshua and Jericho it is fun to march around the church pews, blowing our trumpets.

For the story of David and Goliath it is fun to tell it from David's viewpoint. You can cut out a giant Goliath out of the back of a roll of Christmas wrapping paper and have the children stand next to it. Or you can have a tall man come in and stand on a chair.

For Easter, I like to teach this lesson over two Sundays. Sometimes the second week I have the students teach the story to a lower grade. This helps to ensure that if a child is gone one of these weeks, they still will have heard the Easter lesson.

Even if the Easter or Christmas story does not fall on the holiday in the curriculum, I still prefer to teach it at the proper church calendar time. It is a good reminder to the kids what these holidays are really about.

Say a Bible verse for the students to look up that relates to the story. This is done on a speed basis with the first student finding the verse to read it. Sometimes this is done with boys vs. girls. Other times the top student would sit out, giving the others a chance.

Crossword puzzles can be put on the board, relating to events of the lesson. There is always a lot of interest after the easy words are found.

You can send the children to the blackboard and ask them a question. They write their answer on the board. Each student can explain his answer. This can also be done with students working together in small groups.

One teacher put together statements that presented themselves as true or false or multiple choice. You can try to get the students to present their own views or opinions. This is always difficult but keep on encouraging it.

For the creation story, you can take a field trip outside, and name what day things were created.

Begin your lesson with a BANG or a whisper.

Go around the room and ask each student: What is something you can do for Jesus? Or What is a talent God gave to you?

Have the children draw a smiley face on one side of a sheet of paper and sad face on the other. Get in a circle. Ask application questions relating to the story, and the children hold up the sad face if it would make God sad, or the happy face if it is pleasing to God.

When you talk about a blind man, have everyone close their eyes.