

**Getting Started:
Eleven Guidelines for Children’s Teachers
and their helpers**

Teacher’s prayer: “Dear God, help me to prepare well for my meetings with the children that you love so much.”

1. Use the Paul-Timothy children’s studies.

- Paul-Timothy studies come in sets that contain a study for Shepherds and another study on the same topic for children. Children’s studies have the word ‘Children’ at the top.
- Children learn about the same topic as the adults.
- P-T studies also enable children to prepare ahead of time a Bible story related to the topic that the adults will learn. The children can act out the Bible story for the adults during worship time.



2. Choose activities within a study that fit your children's needs.

- Children's studies contain several activities. These are options. Use those that fit current needs, and for which you have time, and disregard the rest.

3. Let children prepare things during children's meetings to present to the adults during worship.

- For smaller children, let several of them stand up together and speak—or sing—as a chorus, all together.
- This can apply to memory verses, short dramas, poems, songs or brief readings.
- Some children are quiet and shy. To join others and do things together enables them also to take part.

4. Let children sing simple songs written to tunes that they know.

- Add simple songs to the lessons, with tunes that children enjoy.
- You can let older children compose a simple poem about the topic of the week that fits the music.

5. Let smaller children repeat hand motions or bodily movements.

While telling a story or singing, they enjoy moving their fingers, arms or legs. For example, let them participate in telling the story of David killing the giant Goliath.

- When Goliath defies the army of Israel, children shake their fists in the air.
- When David slings the rock, children move their arms as though using a sling.
- When Goliath falls, the children groan and fall. Etc.

Grass—Jesus' parable of the farmer who sowed grain.
Rocks with faces drawn on them—frowning face for bad people, smiling face for good people
Green leaves—Good people are like well-watered trees (Psalm 1).
Withered leaves—Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree (Mark 11:12-24).
A broom—the Holy Spirit sweeping away the sins in our lives.
A bar of soap—Christ's blood is the only soap that washes away our sins.
A glass of water—Jesus promised the Samaritan woman the water of life.
Two sticks joined together—the cross.
A simple fish cut out of paper—Peter fishing.
A pencil—our names are written in the Book of Life.
A dish of fruit—the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
A dish of rice—our great wedding banquet with Christ (Revelation 19:6-10).
A long stick sharpened on one end—the soldier pierces Jesus' side on the cross.
A hammer or saw—Noah and his workers spent many years building the ark.
A flower—God's beautiful creation (Genesis 1), or God's provision (Luke 12:22-32).
A thistle or thorny branch—God's curse when men first sinned (Genesis 3:17-19).

Smaller children enjoy repetition and sounds. Examples:

- If you—or they—are telling the story of the Good Samaritan, let children repeat the sound of the donkey's hooves, walking to the inn, "Clap! Clap! Clap!"
- When telling about Adam and Eve, when the serpent is mentioned let the children hiss loudly several times.

6. Let older children help teach or disciple the younger.

- Explain to older children what they will do.
- Keep it simple. Ask them to do things one step at a time.

7. Let children worship together with the adults.

- Create a feeling of 'family' during worship time by including the children as much as possible.
- The Children's studies include things to prepare to present during the worship time with the adults.
- Prepare them well and present them first in the children's meeting.

8. Listen to the children in tiny groups, and help them grow in Christ.

- PTLT studies provide for a time during the main worship to form tiny groups of three to five, so people can talk and pray with each other. Some of these groups will include children.
- Prepare some adults to talk and pray with the children in these groups.
- Do this after the Bible study, so you can ask questions or make comments about it.
- The New Testament requires us to teach and serve one another in many ways when we gather. This includes children. The Holy Spirit works powerfully when we do this.

9. Find how you can help the children, while talking to them in the tiny groups.

- Ask such things as, “What person in the story do you like best?” “Why?”
- “Do you want to be like that person?” “What will you have to do?”
- “Do you have problems at home, at school or with neighbors that we can pray for?”
- “Who can you help or show kindness to next week?” “What will you do?”
- “Can you tell me one thing you will do to please your mother and father?”
- “What one thing will you do next week to please your brothers or sisters?”

10. Let the children act out Bible stories.

- Children's studies include brief dramas. They can practice them first in children's meetings, and then do them again, with adults' help, during the main worship.
- Children love to act out Bible stories. They remember the spiritual truths better after doing so. They do not rehearse for their own children's teaching time, because the rehearsal is the teaching activity. These dramas work better when kept very short and simple, without asking children to memorize many sentences.
- For example, during a children's meeting when teaching about Joshua fighting the Canaanite idolaters, the teacher might say to some children, "You be Joshua's soldiers" and to others, "You be the Canaanite soldiers."
- The teacher can tell them the words they are to say and let them repeat them, but must let the children supply the actions. They may run around noisily for a moment, finding things to use as swords and shields, and then act out the story. It may take a while to calm them down afterwards to do anything else, but they learn far more this way and they love it.

- Arrange each week with the leader of the main congregational worship, for the children to present the drama.
- If you do not have enough children for all the parts, ask neighbors' children to help. This helps them also to discover Christ.
- Older children normally do better if they do not memorize each word of the dialogue, but rather the general idea of what to say. At first this may be hard to do, but in time the children will prefer using their imaginations, and the dramas will be more convincing. Some children will always prefer to memorize the words. Let them do it either way.

11. Prepare objects or pictures that illustrate what you teach.

- Objects. Example: when teaching about Jesus being the light of the world, children hold a lit candle high while they say a Bible verse or poem.
- Signs. Example: Children hold signs they have drawn while they talk. While telling about Jesus healing the blind man they might hold a sign saying “God Is Love.” If you prefer, three children might each hold a sign, one with the word “God,” another “Is” and the other “Love.”
- Dance. Examples: When telling about the children of Israel passing through the Red Sea on dry ground, let children celebrate by dancing while someone reads what Moses and the people sang afterwards in Exodus 15. They can also form a serpent to illustrate Satan tempting Eve, by forming in a line with taller children in front, each child holding onto the person in front of them, and winding around the room, hissing.

Use common things and whatever you have available. Use your imagination. Simple things illustrate biblical truths best. Use things that children see every day. This helps them remember God when they see these things. Let them hold the objects and talk about them. Examples: