

Theologically Accurate

When teaching kids Biblical truths, it's important that the lessons are relatable, understandable, thought provoking, and include hands-on learning, but the most important thing is that the lessons that are taught are theologically accurate and point kids to the God of the Bible. Kids do not only need to know the stories of the Bible, but they need to know the God of the Bible, His love for them, and the plan He has for them. This is taught by accurately teaching the Word of God which requires time in the Word of God and a love for it. We should seek to build our games and activities around the theological truth we seek for the kids to learn that day instead of playing games and doing activities and trying to “add a little Bible” on top of these.

Relatable

Bible lessons for kids should also be relatable to them. If we try to compare the story of the rich young ruler to how we shouldn't value our jobs and material wealth more than God, that may not resonate with kids who have no jobs and don't understand material wealth. However, if we compare this story to sometimes wanting new toys when we already have so many and not giving to those that don't have any toys, we care more about ourselves than others, and this is not following Jesus, this may resonate better with kids. Both of these explanations of the story are accurate, but the latter is more relatable to the kids which enables them to understand and apply the lesson in the story.

Understandable

We also need to make sure the lessons we teach kids are understandable at the level of learning they are currently at. For instance, if you are teaching a lesson on humility, you need to explain what that word means before starting the lesson as most kids won't know that word. You may also have to cater lessons around how your kids learn best. If you are teaching a toddler class, the use of visuals and interactive lessons will grab their attention much better than just verbally teaching them the lesson.

Thought Provoking

This is where the lessons should encourage thought and conversation in kids. We do not want to create humans that come to church to sit and soak. We want kids to “chew” on what is being taught at an early age and seek to apply to it their lives in even the smallest ways now. For instance, if we are teaching them the story of the Good Samaritan and how we are to be kind to all people, ask your kids challenging questions they can wrestle with like, “who is hard to love?”, “do we sometimes think less of certain people?”, and “who is someone at your school you could show kindness to?”. Additionally, give kids a challenge that week to write a kind note to someone at school or do a kind act for them. This helps kids think deeper on the Scripture and begin to see ways they can apply God's Word to their every day lives.

Hands-on Learning

Hands-on learning is how many kids learn best. This can also be called play-based learning. This means teachers utilize toys, games, activities, and experiments to teach deep theological concepts. The important note here is that the game, activity, ect. is not what we want the child to leave remembering. We want the child to remember the truth that was taught in that game. This means we have to be intentional about the games, activities, ect. we plan for the kids and make sure we plan them around the theological truth we want the kids to learn that day and emphasize this before, during, and after the activity.

Gospel-Centered in Everything

- Kids need to hear the Gospel EVERY time they are with us.
- Kids get stories throughout the day from social media that are not real and ideologies that don't produce the fruit of the Spirit. These stories and ideologies are shaping their worldviews. So as Christians, we have to ask ourselves, "what are we doing to pour the truth of the Gospel into them every chance we get and are we earnestly praying the Holy Spirit radically shapes the way they see and interact with the world around them?"
- Be careful not to fall into the trap of Bible Lite Strategy - Kids don't's need to learn good character apart from Jesus Christ. They need to learn what it means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ and good character will naturally flow from that relationship as they begin to walk in His ways.
- We have to stop teaching virtues apart from Jesus or we will lead our kids to moralism/legalism even if that's not our intention.

Bible Lite Strategy emphasizes virtues, values, morals, or character from the Bible in a way that's unrooted from the Gospel. It isn't necessarily inaccurate, but it is incomplete.

Good character is not the goal of a Christian; it's the byproduct of a life surrendered and cultivated in Jesus Christ.

God's Unfolding Story

Narrative Elements



We believe an understanding of the biblical story is essential to developing a biblical worldview and lifestyle for anyone. The contemporary Church and those who produce resources for today's Church historically have

done a good job of telling the stories (plural) of the Bible, but not a good job of teaching the story (singular) of the Bible. We believe that reality needs to change.

SundaySchoolZone.com

Not Ancient History

The biblical story is not ancient history. The biblical story continues to unfold. It is a story that includes people living today. It is an **unfolding** story, and it involves you and me.

It is our intent to summarize and articulate the biblical story in ways that are appropriate for Bible students of any age to learn. We have articulated the biblical story in six simple elements that an older preschooler can understand and learn for life. The six preschool elements provide a framework for the story that can be enhanced as learners grow and mature. We will then help churches teach the story as a framework for understanding God's kingdom activity.

Yes, It's Interpretive

Any summary or outline of the biblical story is, by default, an interpretation of the story because it will articulate a "story line" that implies and assigns a grand, interpretive scheme to the story. It also will have to select a limited set of broad "events" that form the story's framework. This selection must, by necessity, be interpretive because it treats some events or groupings of events as more important to "the story" than others. We must be careful, therefore, to craft a story that falls "safely" within the mainstream parameters of historic Christian thought. We hope we have accomplished this in a responsible way.

Starting with Preschoolers

The biblical story, however we may summarize it or outline it, must be appropriate for people of all ages and should be teachable and relevant to a person of any age. In fact, God commands His people to teach the story to our “children and grandchildren” (Deut. 4:9). So, it makes sense to craft the story “from the ground up,” meaning we start by crafting a story that is appropriate for preschoolers but is also then usable for any other age group.

Here’s how we outline the biblical story. We call these *God’s Unfolding Story Narrative Elements*. Each element has a corresponding icon as seen in this visual...

God's Unfolding Story

Narrative Elements



..... God created everything.



..... People disobeyed God.



..... God chose a special people.



..... God sent Jesus to help us.



..... Jesus began the Church.



..... Jesus is preparing heaven for us.

We are each called to be “narrators” in God’s kingdom drama. These are the critical elements, the “chapter titles” or “story headers” in His unfolding story.

A Story for All Ages

As learners mature, they will develop a deeper and more age-appropriate understanding of these story elements and be able to articulate the story with greater theological clarity and insight. The outline above will form the framework for the biblical story at any age. We don't want grade schoolers and youth to learn a different story from what they learned in preschool. The biblical story doesn't change as the learners get older, but how we/they articulate the story should change. We want them to build on the story and add increasingly complex concepts. The goal is to help churches teach all learners the biblical story in a way that is appropriate for the age group and can be retained and built upon for life. For example, a church **might** choose to outline the story for grade schoolers like this...

1. Yahweh created all things to show He can be trusted to love us.
2. People disobeyed because they didn't trust Yahweh.
3. Yahweh chose Israel to bring a Redeemer and King.
4. Yahweh sent Jesus to redeem us and establish His Kingdom.
5. Jesus calls the Church to trust Him and expand Yahweh's Kingdom.
6. Jesus is preparing an eternal and heavenly Kingdom for those who trust Him.

The point here is that the story itself does not change even if the way it's articulated changes as learners mature.

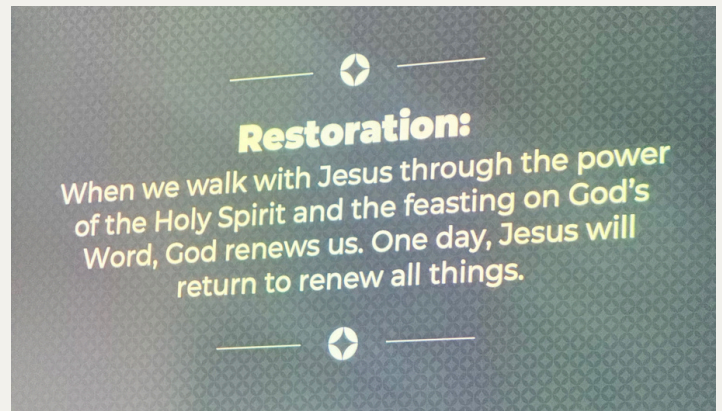
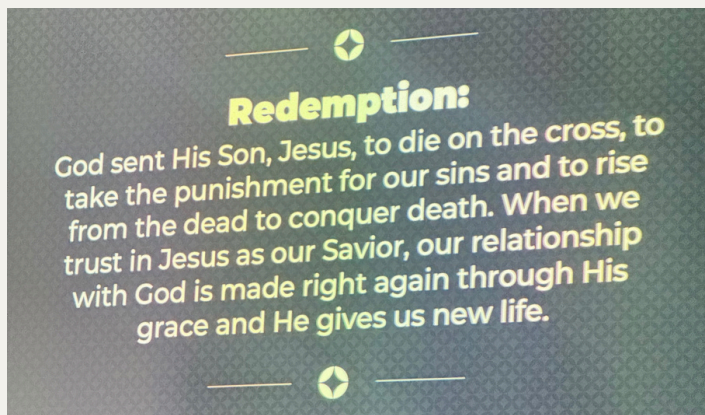
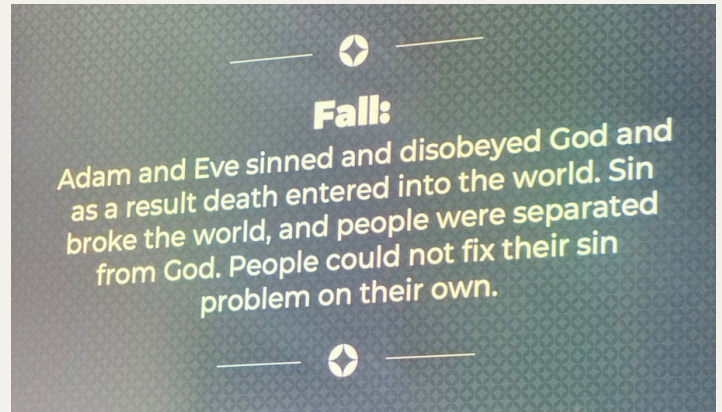
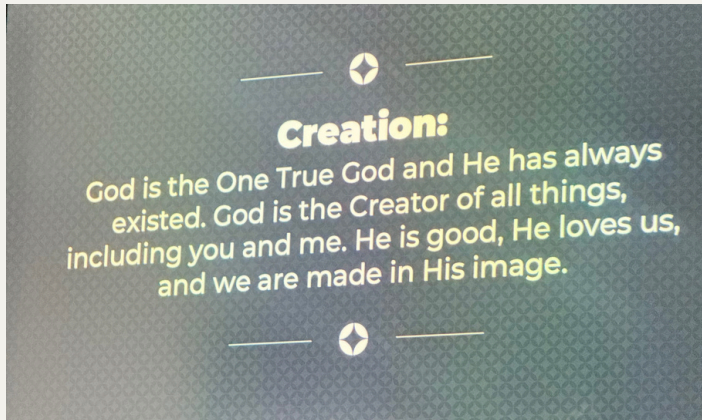
The story elements may become even more complex for youth and adults. When placed in a narrative or paragraph form, it might look like this. . .

Yahweh, our God and King, created all things, He created people in His image and with purpose. Adam and Eve sinned because they didn't trust in Yahweh's goodness and character. Because of sin, humanity and the cosmos are now fallen and broken. In His love, Yahweh promised to send a Messiah to reverse the impact of sin. He then chose and called Israel to be His special people through whom He would bring the Messiah and salvation to all who trust Him. About 2,000 years ago, God sent His son, Jesus, an Israelite, to die for the sins of people and inaugurate God's kingdom on earth. Now God calls those who trust Jesus into a spiritual community of faith; a new, expanded Israel; the Church. Someday Yahweh will consummate His kingdom and establish a new heaven and new earth where Jesus and His Church will reign and live forever.

There is no single or "best" way to articulate the biblical story. The story, or pieces of it, is told in various ways in different places in the Bible. How the basic story was told would vary depending on the circumstances at the time. The basic elements of the story would generally be present along with other aspects of the story that were relevant to that particular telling. As learners mature, the exact wording is less important than a basic understanding of the key elements of the story.

Teach the Kids The Full Gospel Story

We have a habit, at times, to only tell kids part of the Gospel story when they need the **WHOLE GOSPEL**.



We don't need influencers,
we need disciple-makers

Examples of Gospel Presentations for Kids



The Gospel in Colors

GOLD – God created us holy, which means set apart for good works. He created us like Him, as God tells us we were created in His image. God is shown as the color **gold** because it says there are streets of **gold** in Heaven, and gold is very valuable and precious like God. (Genesis 1:27, Revelation 21:21)

Black – We have all sinned which means we have decided to do something God told us not to do. Because of this, we have separated ourselves from God. It says in the Bible that the penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

RED – God loved us so much that even though we sinned against Him, God would send His only son, Jesus, to come and shed His **blood** on a cross and die to pay the punishment we deserved. Jesus rose from the grave 3 days later and is alive today. He promises that we can have eternal life when we die if we repent of our sins and follow Him. (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)

White – When we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins, repent, which means to turn away from them, and commit to following Him the rest of our lives, Jesus washes us white as snow from all our sins. He also fills us with the Holy Spirit, which guides us through our life on Earth to do God's will for us. (Hebrews 10:10–12)

Green – This means we should be always growing as Christians in our relationship with God. We do this through **G**-going to church **R**-eading our Bible and praying **O**-beying God's Word (the Bible) by doing what the Bible says to do and **W**-itnessing to others which means sharing the love of Jesus with those we meet and know by telling them what He's done for them too! (1 Timothy 4:12)



God Rules

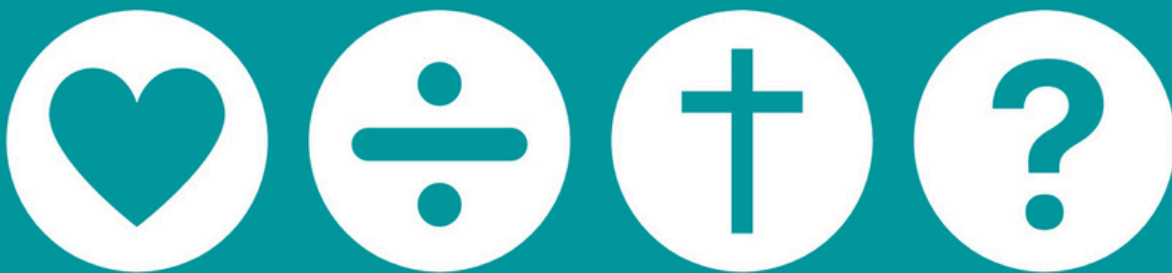
We Sinned

God Provided

Jesus Gives

We Respond

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME



THE FOUR



God Loves You

God totally loves you! His love is boundless and unconditional. The love of God has shown itself through Jesus Christ. This loving God can be experienced, He is real and He wants nothing more than for you to experience His love personally and to discover the purpose of your life in your relationship with Him.



Sin Separates You

Unfortunately, we do not experience God's love because we ignore Him. We search everywhere for meaning and fulfillment – but not with God. We don't trust Him and do not think that He wants the best for us. Going our own way and the selfish actions that result from it are what the Bible calls sin. Sin damages and destroys our relationships with others. Sin keeps us from living the fulfilling life that God intends for us.



Jesus Rescues You

Our sin and our selfish actions do not stop God from loving us. He even became a human being in Jesus Christ and gave His life for us. He took our place on the cross, bearing all the consequences of sin Himself. Jesus died – but He rose to life again. He offers us peace with God and a personal relationship with Him. Through faith in Jesus, we can experience God's love daily, discover our purpose, and have eternal life after death.



Will You Believe?

God has already done everything to show us how much He loves us. Through Jesus Christ, He offers us fulfillment and eternal life. We can talk to God directly – we call it “prayer” – to ask for forgiveness for living our lives without Him.

Through Jesus, we can live with God eternally by trusting in Jesus Christ. Will you follow Jesus?

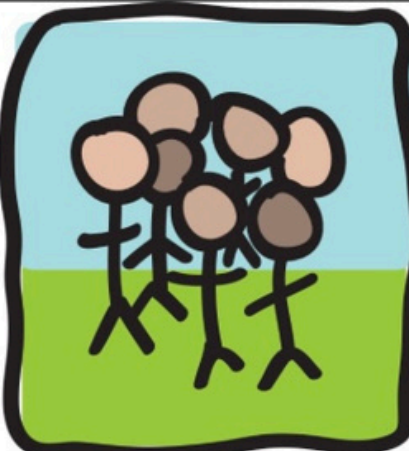
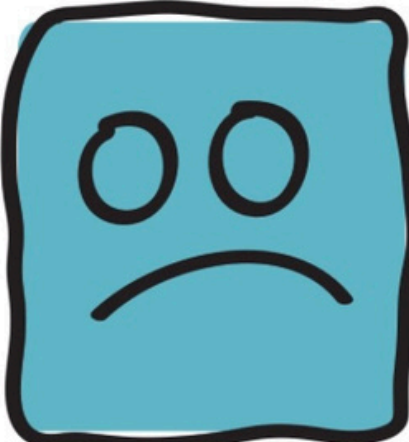
God's Unfolding Story Cube (2.25 X 2.25 inches)



The *God's Unfolding Story Cube* can be used to help children of almost any age learn the biblical story using the ***God's Unfolding Story Narrative Elements***. The

elements were created for older preschoolers, but they can be used for grade school kids as well. The longest is just six words, so they're easy to recite and remember.

The *God's Unfolding Story Cube* can be printed, cut, folded, assembled and cut to create a 2 and 1/4 inch cube for children to use for learning and reviewing the story elements. Because they're printable, the cubes are rather small, so you may want to give one to each child. Children can assist in the assembly for a fun craft activity.



God's Unfolding Story Cube
Instructions: Cut out on dotted lines, fold on solid lines. Glue or tape to form a cube.

Teaching Tools



"For there is one God..."
1 Timothy 2:5 ASV

1

Two Hands to Serve the Lord
"...there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, male and female, as God commanded Noah." Genesis 7:1 ASV



God is Three Persons.
"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." Matthew 28:19 ASV



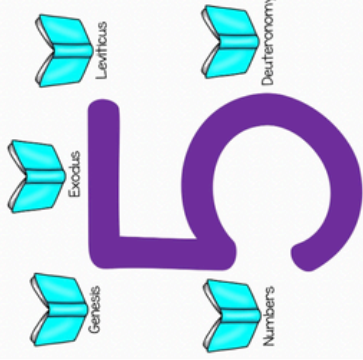
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God Made Four Creatures
(small yet wise)

"There are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceedingly wise: (ant, conies-rock rabbit, locust, lizard) Proverbs 30:24 ASV



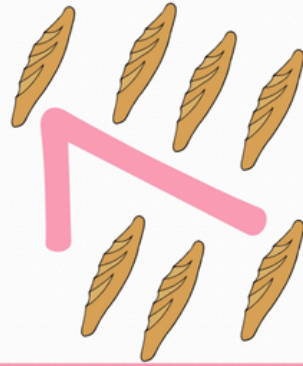
Five Books of the Law
"How I love your law! It is my meditation all day." Psalms 119:97 WEB



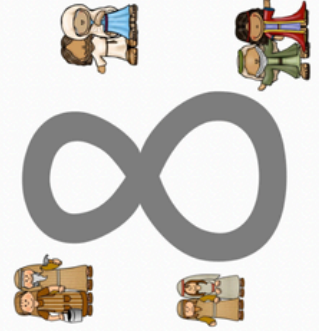
Six Days of Creation Work
"God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because he rested in it from all his work of creation which he had done." Genesis 2:3



Seven Loaves Of Bread
"...and he took the seven loaves and broke the fish. He gave thanks and broke them, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes." Matthew 15:36 WEB



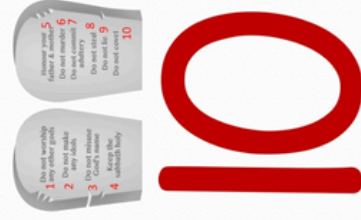
Eight People In The Ark
"In the same day Noah, and Shem, Ham, and Japheth—the sons of Noah—and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered into the ship—" Genesis 7:13 WEB



Nine Fruits Of The Spirit
"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Gal 5:22-23 WEB



10 Commandments
"And God spoke all these words, saying—" Exodus 20:1 WEB



Aa



Adam

Bb



Bibe

Cc



commandments

Dd



Daniel

Ee



earth

Ff



fish

Gg



Goliath

Hh



Heaven

Ii



Isaac

Jj



Jesus

Kk



king

Ll



lamb

Oo



olive branch

Pp



Pray

Qq



Queen Esther

Rr



resurrection

Ss



stable

Mm



Moses

Tt



Trinity

Uu



uprising

Ww



whale

Vv



vine

Xx



Xerxes

Yy



yoke

Zz



Zechariah

o kids



kids.gominno.com



minno

Hello! Who's watching?



WEE



Family



Settings



Logout

Minno is a Christian resource provided on all preschool tvs - ask Pastor Bradley for assistance if needed.

CLASS RULES



STAY IN YOUR SPOT

1

When you come into class, you are to stay in your assigned spot.

2

GIVE IT YOUR BEST

When we sing worship songs or do activities, you are to participate and give your full attention and effort to whatever song or activity we are doing.



LISTEN TO THE PASTOR & TEACHERS

3

When the pastor and/or teachers are talking, you are to listen and be quiet so you can hear all the important things they are teaching you.

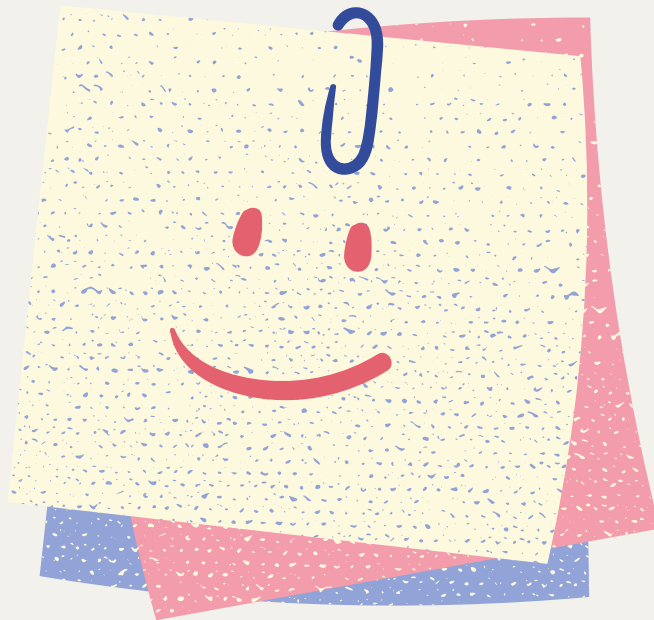
4

BE A SUPER FRIEND

Respect your friends by not touching them during class, talking to them when the lesson is being taught, or distracting them from learning about God.



How to Positively Teach & Reinforce Kids



Positive Guidance for Teachers

Children learn best through experiences. Parents and staff must lovingly guide and redirect children. This helps children learn to cooperate and have positive experiences. Below are some ways teachers help guide behaviors in the classroom:

1. Focus on the Positive: Look for good behavior and comment when you see it. Notice when children share or follow classroom rules. An example would be saying to a child, "Thank you for putting the truck away when you were done playing with it."
2. Make Rules Clear: A few clear, consistently-applied rules lend order and security to a child's environment. Simple rules also help youngsters learn self-discipline. Frequently remind children of rules. Example: "Blocks are not for throwing. They are for building." With time, children will remember the rules and use them to guide their own behavior.
3. Help the Child Express Feelings: When you see that a child seems sad or frustrated, say, "Are you feeling sad?" or "Are you mad because you didn't want to stop playing?" Children are more likely to cooperate when you recognize their feelings, and when you help them express their feelings into words. This also helps children understand their feelings which helps them learn to control them.
4. Redirect the Child's Attention: When a child's behavior is problematic, try redirecting them. Example: "Susan, Tommy doesn't like it when you paint his shirt. If you want to paint, use this big piece of paper over here." Or "Jennifer is not done playing with that truck, but there is another truck over here for you." Redirection works best when you accommodate the child's basic motive or interest.

5. Encourage Problem Solving: Help children solve problems. Encourage them to find their own solutions. Example: “Rodney is riding the tricycle now. What else can you do until he is finished?” Respect a child’s ability to help solve his own problems. Your confidence in him or her may stimulate solutions that didn’t even cross your mind.
☐
6. Ignore Inappropriate Behavior: If a child’s misbehavior is not harming the child or others, it may be best to ignore it. Often, children misbehave as a way of getting attention. After the troublesome behavior stops, try to find out why the child is seeking attention. Help the child receive attention in more positive ways.
7. Use “Calm Down Time”: When a child becomes so disruptive or upset that they lose control of themselves, your immediate goal is to help him or her regain control. Do not threaten or allow yourself to give a frustrated response. Calmly restrain, and if possible, comfort them until they have a chance to cool down. You may need to take him or her entirely out of the group and give them time to regain control of their feelings before re-entering group play.
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How to Effectively Teach Toddlers & Elementary Kids

BE PREPARED! Understand that you are shaping the hearts of the next generation for Jesus. This is not something to take lightly. If you commit to teaching toddlers or kids then take that responsibility seriously. This means if you are a Sunday School or Wednesday Night teacher you are prepared to lead and teach BEFORE the day you teach. This means studying the lesson throughout the week, spending time in Scripture, and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Kids know when you don't prepare and will take that as a sign they aren't that important to you. Additionally, you will be prone to simply just read the lesson instead of engaging the kids in it, which does not adequately teach kids the Gospel truths they need to learn. You are not a reader but a teacher to these kids.

See the next few pages on how to teach toddlers and elementary kids most effectively.

BEST WAYS TO MANAGE A CLASS OF TODDLERS



Establish Predictable Routines

Use a visual schedule and signal transitions.



Build Strong Relationships

Greet each child and connect one-on-one



Use Positive Guidance (Not Punishment)

Give simple choices and redirect misbehavior



Engage with Movement, Music, and Sensory Play

Use songs, fingerplays, and hands-on centers



Keep Instructions Short & Simple

Give two-step directions



Plan for Transitions

Use a transition song and give warnings



Prepare the Environment

Provide clear zones for different activities



Work as a Team with Volunteers or Co-Teachers

Have clear roles and consistent expectations



Integrate Faith Naturally

Use short Bible phrases, songs, and pictures

Teaching Elementary Kids

1. Connect the Lesson to Their World

Older kids are asking, “Why does this matter to me?” – so start there.
Use real-life examples: Show how the story relates to school, sports, friends, or family.
Ask “I wonder” questions: e.g., “I wonder how Joseph felt when his brothers betrayed him?” When kids see how to apply the Bible to their own lives, it makes their faith personal. Jesus connected Biblical truths to real-life situations when speaking with others so they could understand more clearly the message and see how to directly apply it in their own lives. Kids especially need this.
Share short stories or testimonies when you can.

2. Get Them Moving and Thinking

Kids learn best when they’re doing something interactive with the truth being taught.
Games and challenges: Bible verse relays, scavenger hunts, or
or create a skit showing how someone in the Bible faced a hard choice.
Interactive questions: Instead of a lecture, ask: “What would you have done?”
or “What do you think God wanted the people to learn?”

3. Encourage Discussion and Discovery

Older kids crave independence – so guide them to discover
the truth themselves. Use open-ended questions:
“Why do you think Jesus said that?” “What does this teach us about who God is?”
Small group conversations: Let the kids share ideas with peers before answering aloud.
Scripture exploration: Give the kids verses to find and compare. Use Bible tabs or
journaling Bibles if applicable.

4. Focus on Relationship, Not Just Rules

Help them see the heart of God, not just the “right answers.” We don’t want to raise
Pharisees, but we want to raise disciples of Jesus.
Talk about why obedience matters – because we love and trust God.
Let them share struggles, doubts, or questions without judgment.
Model authenticity – when leaders admit, “I’ve struggled with that too,” it builds trust.

5. Engage Different Learning Styles

Rotate how you present truth each week:
Visual learners: Posters, comics, art, videos.
Auditory learners: Music, reading Scripture dramatically, storytelling.
Kinesthetic learners: Crafts, skits, or interactive prayer stations.

6. End with Application and Reflection

Help them walk away with something personal.
Ask: “What is one thing you can do differently this week because of what we learned?”
Prayer journaling: Have them write or draw a short prayer response.
Group reflection: Let volunteers share “what stood out to me today.”

Discipleship Strategies

- Establish appropriate expectations the first week.
- Be CONSISTENT about expectations.
- Be prepared.
- Offer interesting and inviting activities to the children so they are not bored.
- Look for trouble before it happens.
- Use a soft voice when correcting a child.
- Take time to listen to the child.
- Always show love to the child even when you are having a rough day.
- Teach God's plan for them through the use of Scripture when correction is needed.

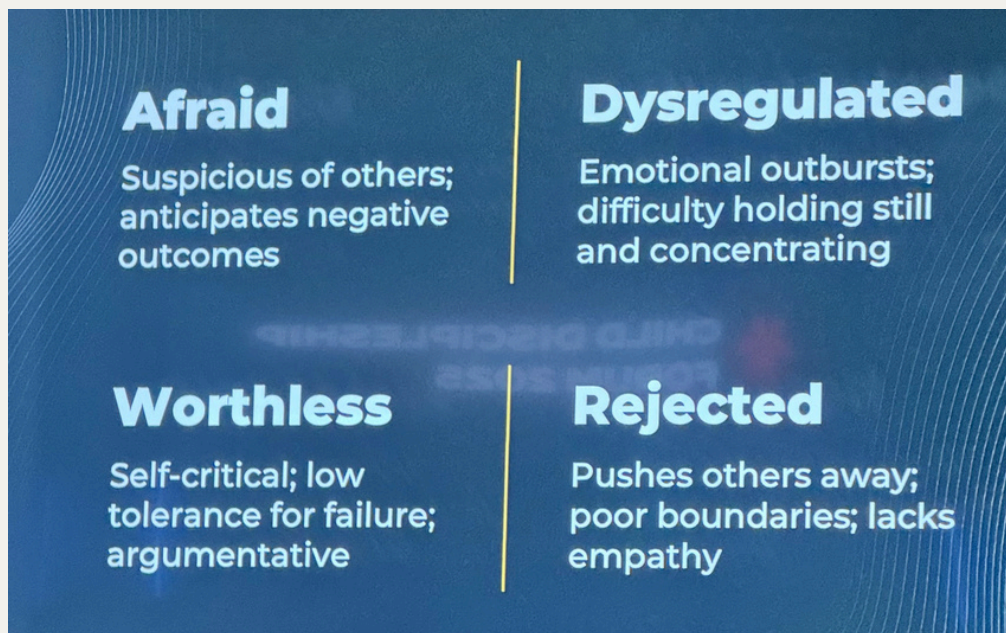
Trauma-Informed Kids Ministry



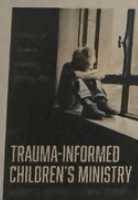
Trauma Dramatically Effects Kids

In 10-14 year olds, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in America.

Trauma makes kids feel....



FEATURED RESOURCE:



TRAUMA-INFORMED CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO REACHING HURTING KIDS

Trauma-Informed Children's Ministry: A Practical Guide to Reaching Hurting Kids is the culmination of ten years of research in the field of children's ministry science. Written by research psychologist Dr. Robert Crosby and play therapist Lori Crosby, this easy-to-read book is full of real-world stories and practical strategies for ministering to kids who have experienced trauma.

Increasing Prevalence of Potentially Traumatic Events

Among US high school students:

- 3 in 4 reported at least one potentially traumatic event.
- 1 in 5 reported 4+ traumatic events.
- 60% reported emotional abuse.
- 31.8% reported physical abuse.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2023)

Increasing Prevalence and Severity of Trauma Response

Among 6th graders in the US:

- 1 in 5 has seriously considered suicide.
- 1 in 7 has made a plan about how they would kill themselves.
- 1 in 12 has tried to kill themselves.

Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC), 2021



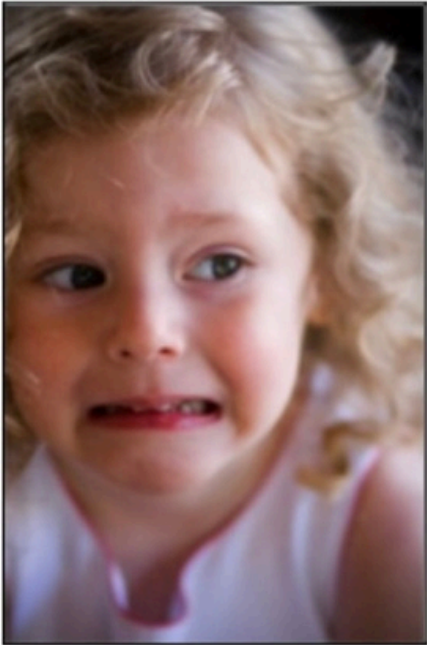
Trauma Signs and Symptoms

Trauma signs and symptoms in young children can take many forms. Understanding these signs and symptoms as trauma related depends upon sensitive information gathering from the child, family, and Early Head Start and Head Start staff. That said, the signs and symptoms listed below must always be considered in the context of a young child's history, caregiving system, supports, etc. and with recognition that these symptoms could also be symptoms unrelated to trauma.



Infants
(birth to 3 years)

- Eating disturbance
- Sleep disturbances
- Somatic complaints
- Clingy/separation anxiety
- Feeling helpless/passive
- Irritable/difficult to soothe
- Constricted play, exploration, mood
- Repetitive/post-traumatic play
- Developmental regression
- General fearfulness/new fears
- Easily startled
- Language delay
- Aggressive behavior
- Sexualized behavior
- Talking about the traumatic event and reacting to reminders/trauma triggers



Young children
(3 to 6)

- Avoidant, anxious, clingy
- General fearfulness/new fears
- Helplessness, passive, low frustration
- Restless, impulsive, hyperactive
- Physical symptoms (headache, etc.)
- Difficulty identifying what is bothering them
- Inattention, difficulty problem solving
- Daydreaming or dissociation
- Irritability
- Aggressive behavior
- Sexualized behavior
- Loss of recent developmental achievements
- Repetitive/ post-traumatic play
- Talking about the traumatic event and reacting to reminders/trauma triggers
- Sadness/depression
- Poor peer relationships and social problems (controlling/over permissive)

How Do We Respond to Trauma?

We shift our mindset from reacting to behaviors to responding to them, knowing all behavior is communication

Responding vs. Reacting

UNDERLYING FEELINGS

Noah felt afraid, dysregulated, worthless

BEHAVIOR

Noah gets angry and shoves another child

REACTING TO THE BEHAVIOR

- Yelling at Noah
- Putting Noah in time-out
- Sending Noah to the back of the line
- Sending Noah to go sit with his parents

Responding vs. Reacting

UNDERLYING FEELINGS

Isaac felt worthless (powerless, ashamed), rejected, dysregulated

BEHAVIOR

Defiance, lying, lack of attention, hiding, mocking, self-harm

RESPONDING TO THE UNDERLYING FEELINGS

- Give Isaac choices
- Incorporate movement
- Shorten lessons
- Build a relationship

Shift our mindset from “This kid is giving me a hard time.” To “This kid is having a hard time today.”

We have to tear down any barriers that prevent kids from hearing, seeing, and feeling the love of the Gospel of Jesus.