

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Christian Education for Children

How to disciple children up to 12 years old

MÓNICA
MASTRONARDI



Christian Education for Children

Course for the Christian Discipleship Specialty

Church of the Nazarene

Mesoamerica Region

Mónica E. Mastronardi de Fernández
General Coordinator for the Specialty



Christian Education for Children
A book in the series School of Leadership
Christian Discipleship Speciality

Authors:

Yamileth Mora Gamboa (lessons 1 - 4).

Irene Mena Arias (lessons 5 - 8).

General Coordinator of the Specialty: Mónica E. Mastronardi de Fernández.

Spanish Editor: Dr. Mónica E. Mastronardi de Fernández

Reviewer: Dr. Rubén E. Fernández

English Editor: Monte Cyr

Material produced by EDUCATION AND PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT of the Church of the Nazarene,
and Mesoamerica Region Nazarene Discipleship International

www.discipleship.MesoamericaRegion.org

www.NdiResources.MesoamericaRegion.org

Translated from Spanish by Elizabeth Guevara Cabrera

Copyright © 2024 - All rights reserved

ISBN: 978-1-63580-334-1

The reproduction of this material is only permitted for the use of the local church.

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the verses of scriptures that are quoted are from the NIV Bible, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Design: Juan Manuel Fernández



NAZARENE DISCIPLESHIP
INTERNATIONAL
MESOAMERICA REGION

Lesson Index

Lesson 1	Characteristics of children from 1 to 3 years old	10
Lesson 2	Class Session design for toddlers	21
Lesson 3	Characteristics of 4 and 5 year old children	30
Lesson 4	Class Session Design for Preschoolers	40
Lesson 5	Characteristics of 6 to 9 year old children	49
Lesson 6	Class Session Design for Elementary Children	57
Lesson 7	Characteristics of children from 10 to 12 years old	66
Lesson 8	Class Session Design for Pre-adolescents	74

Presentation

The book series: Leadership School, has been designed with the purpose of providing a tool to the church for the formation, qualification and training of its members in order to integrate them actively in Christian service, according to the gifts and calling (vocation) they have received from their Lord.

Each book provides the study material for a course in the Leadership School program sponsored by the Spanish-speaking Theological Institutions of the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene. These are: NBI (Nazarene Bible Institute) (Coban, Guatemala); NTS (Nazarene Theological Seminary) (Guatemala City); SENAMEX (Mexico City, Mexico); SENDAS (Nazarene Seminary of the Americas), (San Jose, Costa Rica); SND (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) and SETENAC (Havana, Cuba). A good number of the leaders of these institutions (rectors, directors, vice-rectors and directors of decentralized studies) actively participated in the design of the program.

The Leadership School has five Basic Courses, common to all ministries, and six Specialized Courses for each ministry, at the end of which the Theological Institution grants the student a certificate (or diploma) in Specialized Ministry.

The general objective of the Leadership School is: "To collaborate with the local church in the equipping of the "saints for the work of the ministry", strengthening in them a solid biblical theological knowledge and developing them in the exercise of their gifts for service in their local congregation and in society". The specific objectives of this program are threefold:

- To develop the ministry gifts of the local congregation.
- To multiply ministries of service in the church and community.
- To awaken the vocation to diversified professional ministry.

The objective of this Specialty entitled "Christian Discipleship" is to train those who have gifts for discipleship and the desire to participate in the Great Commission, but do not currently have a professional ministerial education. The lessons in these six books have been written by missionaries, pastors and lay people throughout the Mesoamerica Region and it is the desire of the authors that each student will receive an enriched vision of the Great Commission and the training to disciple others for Christ. We desire that God will be glorified through these courses and that each student will grow in their preparation and service as an effective worker in His work.

We thank Dr. Mónica Mastronardi de Fernández for her dedication as General Editor of the project, the Regional Ministry Coordinators and the team of writers and designers who collaborated in the publication of these books. We also thank the teachers who will share these materials. They will make a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout Mesoamerica.

Finally, we cannot fail to thank Dr. Rubén Fernández, Coordinator of Education and Pastoral Development for the impetus given to the publication of these materials, and Dr. L. Carlos Sáenz, MAR Regional Director, for his ongoing support in this task, the fruit of his conviction of the priority need for a church that is integrally equipped.

We pray for God's blessing on all the disciples whose lives and Christian service will be enriched by these books.

Rev. Monte Cyr
Discipleship Ministries Coordinator
Mesoamerica Region

What Is the School of Leadership?

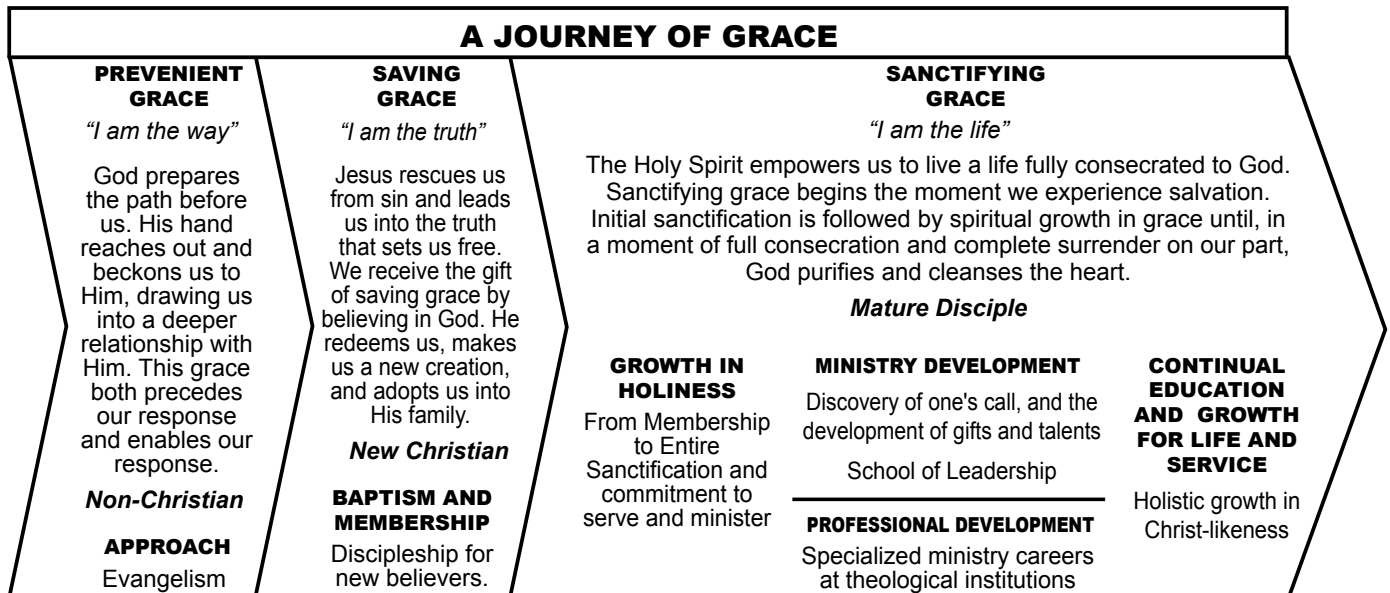
The **School of Leadership** is an educational program for lay ministry in different specialties to engage in the mission of the local church. This program is administered by the Theological Institutions of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mesoamerica Region and taught both at these institutions and in the local churches enrolled in the program.

Who Can Benefit from the School of Leadership?

It is for all the members of the Church of the Nazarene who have participated in Levels Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness of the discipleship program A Journey of Grace, and who, with all their heart, wish to discover their gifts and serve God in His work.

The Plan - A Journey of Grace

In the Church of the Nazarene, we believe that making disciples in the image of Christ in the nations is the foundation of the missionary work of the church and the responsibility of its leadership (Ephesians 4:7-16). For this, at all levels of the church, the implementation of progressive discipleship is promoted as “A Journey of Grace” (John 14: 6), a lifestyle of discipleship. The School of Leadership is part of the “Sanctifying Grace - Ministry Development” section, and is designed for those who have gone through the “Prevenient Grace” and “Saving Grace” sections of the discipleship path.



The work of discipleship is continuous and dynamic; therefore, the disciple never stops growing in the likeness of his Lord. This growth, when healthy, occurs in all dimensions: the individual dimension (spiritual growth), the corporate dimension (joining the congregation), the holiness in life dimension (progressive transformation of our being and doing according to the model of Jesus Christ) and the service dimension (investing our lives in ministry).

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez
Managing Editor, The School of Leadership Book Series



How Do I Use This Book?

This book contains eight lessons of the School of Leadership program, along with activities and final evaluation of the course.

How are the contents of this book organized?

Each of the eight lessons of this book contains the following:

- **Objectives:** These are the learning objectives the student is expected to understand at the end of the lesson.
- **Main Ideas:** A summary of the key teachings of the lesson.
- **Development of Lesson:** This is the largest section because it is the development of the contents of the lesson. The lessons have been written so that the book can be the teacher, and for that reason the contents have been written in a dynamic form and in simple language with contemporary ideas.
- **Notes and Comments:** The information in the margins is intended to clarify terms and provide notes that complement or extend the content of the lesson.
- **Questions:** Sometimes questions are included in the margin that the teacher can use to introduce or reinforce a lesson topic.
- **What did we learn?:** The box at the end of the lesson development section provides a brief summary of the lesson.
- **Activities:** This is a page at the end of each lesson that contains learning activities, for individuals or groups, on the subject studied. The estimated time for implementation in class is 20 minutes.
- **Final evaluation of the course:** This is the last page of the book and once completed the student must remove it from the book and hand it in to a course instructor. The final evaluation should take about 15 minutes.

How long is each course?

The courses are designed for 12 hours of class over 8 ninety-minute sessions. Each institution and each church or local theological study center will coordinate days and times of the classes. Within this hour and a half the teacher or the teachers should include time for the activities contained in the book.

What is the role of the student?

The student is responsible for the following:

1. Enroll on time for the course.
2. Buy the book and study each lesson before class time.
3. Arrive for class on time.
4. Participate in class activities.
5. Participate in practical ministry in the local church outside of class.
6. Complete and submit the final evaluation to the teacher.

What is the role of the teacher of the course?

The professors and teachers for the School of Leadership courses are pastors and laity committed to the mission and ministry of the church and preferably have experience in the ministry they teach. The Director and/or the School of Leadership at the local church (or theological institution) invites their participation and their functions are the following:

1. Be well prepared by studying the book's content and scheduling the use of class time. When studying the lesson, you should have on hand the Bible and a dictionary. Although the lessons are written using simple language, it is recommended that you "translate" what you consider difficult in order to help the students understand. In other words, use terms that they can better understand.
2. Ensure that the students are studying the material in the book and achieving the learning objectives.
3. Plan and accompany students in the activities of ministerial practice. The local pastor and the director of the respective ministry must schedule these activities. These activities should not take away from class time.
4. Take daily attendance and grades in the class report form. The final average will be the result demonstrated by the student in the following activities:
 - a. Class work
 - b. Participation in ministerial practice outside of class
 - c. Final evaluation
5. At the end of the course, collect the evaluation sheets and hand them in with the form "Class Report" to the local School of Leadership director. Do this after totaling the averages and verifying that all data is complete on the form.
6. Professors and teachers should not add tasks or reading assignments apart from the contents of the book. They should be creative in the design of the learning activities and in planning ministry activities outside the classroom according to the reality of their local church and its context.

How do I teach a class?

We recommend using a 90-minute class session as follows:

- **5 minutes:** Review the topic of the previous lesson and pray together.
- **30 minutes:** Review and discuss the lesson. We recommend using an outline, chalkboard, cardboard or other available materials, using dynamic learning activities and visual media such as graphics, drawings, objects, pictures, questions, assigning students to submit parts of the lesson, and so on. We do not recommend lecturing or having the teacher reread the lesson content.
- **5 minutes:** Break either in the middle of class or when it is convenient.

- **20 minutes:** Work on activities in the book. This can be done at the beginning, middle or end of the review, or you can complete the activities as you proceed in accordance with the issues as it relates to them.
- **20 minutes:** Discussion about the students' ministry practice that they currently do and that they will do. At the beginning of the course you will need to present the schedule to the students so that they can make arrangements to attend the ministry practice. In the classes when the students discuss their ministry practice, the conversation should be focused on what they learned, including their successes and their errors, as well as the difficulties they encountered.
- **10 minutes:** Prayer for the issues arising from the practice (challenges, people, problems, goals, gratitude for the results, among others).

How do I implement the final course evaluation?

Allocate 15 minutes of time during the last class meeting for the course evaluation. If necessary, students may consult their books and Bibles. Final evaluations are designed to be an activity to reinforce what was learned in class and not a repetition of the contents of the book. The purpose of this assessment is to measure the understanding and evaluation of the student concerning the class topics, their spiritual growth, their progress in the commitment to the mission of the church and their progress in ministerial experience.

Ministry Practice Activities

The following are suggested activities for out-of-class ministry practice. Included in the following list are several ideas to help teachers, pastors, local School of Leadership director and local ministry directors. From these, you can choose the ones that best fit the contextual reality and ministry of the local church or they can be replaced by others according to your needs and possibilities.

It is recommended to have no less than three ministry activities per course. You can have the entire class work on the same project or assign tasks in groups according to their interests, gifts and abilities. Involve students in a variety of ministry experiences that are new to them.

Suggested ministry activities for the Christian Education for Children course

1. Serve as an assistant teacher in one of the children's classes for 6 weeks.
2. Organize a fundraiser for the purpose of equipping the children's classrooms with teaching materials such as toys, paper, crayons, scissors, etc. (3 or 4 students, along with the Local NDI team).
3. Form a work team to make repairs and/or paint the Sunday School classrooms.
4. Organize a collection, sales or paid volunteer work (such as washing cars, etc.), in order to raise funds to equip classrooms for young children with adequate furniture.
5. Design T-shirts for the entire team of teachers and assistants to be properly identified, whether in Sunday School class, camp or Vacation Bible School days.
6. Organize a special activity for the parents of the children who attend the church to inform them of the goals for the coming weeks and involve them in the spiritual formation of their children.
7. Elaborate and present to the NDI Director a lesson plan, with its corresponding lessons, (one bimester of Sunday School) for one of the children's groups, applying what has been learned in this course.



Lesson 1

Characteristics of Children from 1 to 3 years old

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- To know the physical and social skills of children.
- Describe their learning styles.
- Prepare a suitable classroom.
- Involve parents in their education.

Main Ideas

- Each baby is unique and develops at his or her own pace.
- The involvement of parents, in parallel to the work of the church, is of utmost importance for the spiritual development of children.

Introduction

The first three years of life of every human being are fundamental. They have an impact on personal development in all areas: social, physical, mental, spiritual, affective and language. Likewise, the first years are ideal for the formation of essential habits for Christian life, such as prayer, obedience, meeting together, giving, empathy, among others. At this stage, children are completely dependent on adults in basic aspects (such as food, cleanliness and care), who will provide them with everything necessary to meet those needs.

As they grow up, they become much more independent and want to do things by themselves. Their attitudes of "I'm on my own," "I can do it," "I can," are good and it will be important to provide them with the autonomy that will help them feel confident and able to achieve what they set out to do. They will begin to have challenging behaviors and explosions of emotions that will require adults to accompany and guide them on the path of self-regulation, calm and emotional management, allowing them to express what they feel without feeling judged or scolded, but rather, understood, happy and loved.

It is important to emphasize that each child develops at their own pace.

In this lesson we will study the common characteristics of the physical and social development of babies, although differences between children of the same age are normal and to be expected, since in addition to their own development, other contextual factors are involved, such as the social and family environment.

Physical skills of children

In this section we will learn about motor skills of babies.



In the first years of life, in the psychomotor area in general, great advances and many changes will be observed, because from one age range to another, their skills are perfected and strengthened. This is a process that allows children to show their development, not only physically, but also cognitively.

Baby:
is a term that comes from the French, and refers to young children who are still nursing.

Gross motor skills (which include the movement and control of large muscles, such as those of the legs, arms and trunk, which are also related to balance, body awareness and strength), begin to develop from birth with the control of their head or when they learn to turn their body and position themselves upside down. At this stage, at 12 months, a child with optimal development will be able to crawl and, in a short time, will move by walking, holding on to edges of surfaces to finally start walking independently.

Fine motor skills include movements of small muscles, such as the hands and fingers, in total connection with the eyes, which is known as "hand-eye coordination." Their development also begins in their first months of life, for example, when holding objects with their hands or holding small things with their fingers and bringing them to their mouths. They are also learning to control their movements much more precisely, so at first, we will see that they easily drop things, but little by little, they will become more expert in their movements and manipulation of objects.

Thus, as they reach more and more physical developmental goals, they greatly expand their understanding of the world around them. At this stage, babies learn through their senses, so we must offer them sensory opportunities such as walking barefoot in the grass or sand, touching different textures, observing their environment, experimenting with different smells, sounds, flavors, etc.

This is a key period in language acquisition. For communication skills to develop optimally, from their first months of life babies need to be surrounded by verbal and non-verbal communication, i.e., words, gestures, sounds and images. In their first attempts, infants start with gurgling and babbling and communicate by crying. Gradually, they add syllables, words and movements to their communication.

As for toilet training, most, if not all babies, use diapers.

Physical characteristics of 1 year old babies. They can:

- Crawl, walk holding on to different surfaces or walk on their own.
- Stand up, holding on to objects, or stand on their own.
- Push chairs, boxes or toys with or without wheels.
- Learn to walk sideways and backwards.
- Go up and down stairs with support or four-point stairs.
- Learn to run imprecisely.
- Kick a ball.
- Dance.
- Climb furniture.
- Open drawers and take things out.
- Make towers of at least 2 to 6 blocks.
- Throw objects.
- Scribble with a pencil.
- Fit objects together.
- Put in and take out objects.
- Eat and drink alone, try to use cutlery, even imprecisely.

Psychomotor:

It refers to the development in children in motor, expressive and creative activities, based on the management and coordination of body movements.

- Take off some clothes by themselves.
- Turn the pages of a book, like to be read to and look at the pictures.
- Clap their hands.
- Say some words such as mama, dada, water, milk and by the end of 12 months they pronounce many more words.
- Acquire new words quickly.
- Say hello or goodbye with their hands.
- Point to objects.
- Understand and respond with gestures or actions to questions such as: where is your head, imitating animal sounds and movements, blowing a kiss, etc.
- Follow simple commands of an action "come," "give me the ball," etc, and by the end of 12 months, slightly more complex commands such as "bring the toy and keep it here".
- Know, point to or name some parts of their body.

Physical characteristics of 2 year old children. They can:

- Run more precisely.
- Jump with both feet.
- Balance on one foot.
- Go up and down stairs without support, alternating feet.
- Kick a ball.
- Catch a ball with their hands.
- Climb with agility.
- Eat alone using cutlery more accurately.
- Draw scribbles, make lines and circles.
- Brush their teeth and hair.
- Open and close bottle caps and doorknobs.
- Pull their pants up and down.
- Assemble and disassemble their block towers.
- Speak an average of 50 words or more.
- Understand everything we say.
- Form sentences of 4 to 6 words and can combine subjects and verbs.
- What they say is quite understandable.
- Repeat what they hear.
- Answer simple questions.
- Ask "What is that? Why?"
- Start with plurals, e.g., "dogs".
- Can identify pictures in a book and point to them.

Physical characteristics in 3 year old children. They can:

- Jump and stand on one foot.
- Learn to pedal.
- Jump from a piece of furniture to the floor.
- Throw balls high with one hand.
- Learn to rock on a swing.
- Button and unbutton.
- Build shapes with pieces of wood, Legos, or play dough.
- Copy some letters or shapes.
- Learn to cut with scissors in an imprecise way.
- Make figures and drawings that other people can recognize.
- Speak fluently and easily, generally everything they say is understood.
- Tell what happened to them in a day.
- Express ideas and feelings.
- Describe in words.

Cognitive:

It refers to the process by which human beings acquire knowledge through learning and experience, by learning to use perception, memory, problem solving, planning and language.

Social characteristics

In this section we will study how babies relate to each other.



A baby's social development begins from the moment he or she is born. This is a crucial stage for the development of healthy self-esteem and security in children. From their first breath, they have the need to connect with the people around them, so it is necessary to provide them with positive and secure relationships. These early experiences will lay the foundation for their social and emotional development and will have a positive or negative impact on their future life.

These children learn to communicate with others and become socially aware of the rules and norms of their environment. They acquire these learning experiences through playing with other children, waiting their turn, cooperating, conflict resolution, etc. They also develop emotional awareness by recognizing their own and others' emotions, and learn to self-regulate and express their feelings appropriately.

The learning of social skills is done through "trial and error" experiences. The models they receive from their environment are crucial since children acquire much of their social behaviors through imitation. They closely observe and imitate both adults and other children in their environment (this is why they are compared to "sponges"), so we must be very careful of what we say, do or model. Babies are eager to learn, connect and explore, so they have all the capacity and interest to receive what we are going to teach them.

*"Children absorb like 'sponges' all the information they need and require for their daily life. The child learns to speak, write and read in the same way as he does when crawling, walking, running, etc., that is, spontaneously".
(María Montessori).*

One easily observed characteristic of their emotional development is their egocentrism. It is difficult for them to share; that is why they go through stages in playing. First, they play alone, then they play in pairs and cooperatively, and by the end of the stage they are able to interact with others in a conscious way.

Another characteristic that distinguishes babies is that they are transparent in showing their emotions. They can explode in intense joy or also overflow with anger. Therefore, they require an environment that fills them with security, in which they feel understood and contained. They need to have people around them who understand that they are going through a stage of their development and that the tantrums that appear are not due to bad behavior, but because they are still learning to manage their emotions and express them correctly.

Social characteristics of 1 year old babies.

- They form strong emotional bonds with their bonding models (mom, dad, grandmother) and feel insecure when they are separated from them.
- They have increased fears.
- They recognize themselves and other people.
- They respond to their name.
- They like to see themselves in a mirror or in pictures.
- They concentrate for a short time on what catches their attention.
- They play alone, they do not yet interact much with other children, they show interest, but they play in parallel, that is, next to each other.
- They try to imitate other children and even adults.
- They see themselves as the center of the world, egocentrism.
- They find it difficult to share.
- They express new emotions such as jealousy, frustration, pride, shame.

Social characteristics in 2 year old children.

- They are still self-centered (egocentrism). Strong sense that everything is theirs, but do not understand what belongs to others, act selfishly.
- They are not yet able to understand the feelings of others, so if they want something, they push, hit or scratch the other without caring.
- Tantrums appear.
- They find it difficult to control their emotions and express them verbally: "I'm angry," "I got scared."
- They demand independence, but at the same time they require help.
- They find it difficult to wait their turn.
- Their desire to imitate others increases, they feed the dolls, talk to them, put them to bed, as their parents do, that is to say, they reproduce what they see and experience.

- They play with other children, but do not interact much yet.
- They participate in group games, such as singing and dancing.

Social characteristics in 3 year old children.

- They recognize themselves and those around them as people, so empathy appears and they begin to care about the feelings of others.
- They begin to play with other children, peer and cooperative play, there is interaction.
- They begin to learn to resolve simple conflicts.
- They are interested in sharing.
- They develop social norms, learn to wait their turn, ask for things with please, say thank you.
- They show their emotions and express their needs.
- They begin with symbolic play: police, cooks, etc.
- They talk to themselves.
- They are more social because they communicate better with other people through language; since they pronounce more clearly, this allows them to ask for things, ask questions, tell stories, etc.

How do children learn?

In this section we will study how to teach little children



Let us remember that each child is different in terms of age groups and also within their age group and that the general characteristics of the child vary according to their physical, mental, social and spiritual development. The teacher who knows their students individually and also the group, will be able to plan their classes adequately, including teaching the lesson, assessing learning, leading learning activities, etc.

How can the teacher best know the child coming into the Bible class?

- ✓ By watching them.
- ✓ By visiting them at home, to get to know the environment in which they live and by talking with their caregivers.
- ✓ Getting to know their problems, interests, family.
- ✓ Studying and training on the characteristics of children of their age.

How do babies learn? All children learn through active play; that's why they only sit still for a few moments.

They learn by experiencing their environment through their senses, which is why they like and are impressed by movements in songs, all kinds of rhythmic sounds, poems, exercises of expression, etc. Illustrated teaching with images, gestures, sounds or objects is of utmost importance at this stage.

Teachers should use simple and concrete language for these children. Words that they will not be able to understand should be avoided, since their knowledge and vocabulary are limited to what they handle in their daily lives. When incorporating new terms in Bible stories, we need to illustrate them, for example: whale, ark, altar, etc.

Babies have a limited concentration capacity, approximately 3 to 4 minutes, that is why in the classes we have to make active pauses, that is to say, we relate the lesson in stages, alternating with pauses for a song or a game with movement and then we continue with the lesson.

The teacher of the infant class should take advantage of the valuable characteristics that this age group offers for the design of learning activities. Toddlers are imaginative, gullible and very easy to impress. They love stories, they like the teacher to dramatize, doing voices, varying the intonation, bringing the characters to life. You can use visual resources such as dolls, objects, puppets, costumes and any visual aid at hand. They also love to ask questions, an excellent moment to teach them everything they want to know, taking into account the above mentioned.

The teacher should have everything prepared in advance. Children will require a lot of help, so activities and crafts should be simple.

All construction begins with the foundation, and at this stage, we have the foundation of life, these years are fundamental because they transcend in all its different areas until the future.

Involving the parents in the spiritual formation of their babies.

In this section we will define parental responsibility.



From the local church we should help parents to assume their responsibility in the spiritual formation of their children. Parents are the most influential people in the spiritual life of children. They are the ones who should teach them to be disciples of Jesus and model the Christian life by the example of their lives. It is primarily at home where children learn to love God and love others by seeing the witness of life in their family. And of course, a child's spiritual development will be reflected in how much or how little their family has guided them in this area.

The local church shares with parents the responsibility of discipling and preparing children for ministry and providing opportunities for them to serve. Both church and parents must work together, joining in a true partnership. To achieve this goal, we can implement actions such as these:

- ✓ Equipping parents in their task as disciplers by offering workshops, support groups or books, etc.
- ✓ Communication is key: calls, messages, informing them about the topics they are studying in Bible lessons, about the activities they are doing, about special activity dates, etc. It is also necessary to ask them about the child: if there is any special situation in the family (arrival of a sibling, moving, behavior, etc.) or any crisis or need they are facing (economic, divorce, grieving, illness, etc.).

What are little children's favorite Bible stories?

- ✓ Send the children home with material from the lessons they are learning so that together with their parents they can read the bible, do some homework or a devotional.
- ✓ Conduct activities that involve the whole family: movie evenings, retreats or family camps.
- ✓ Of course, take time to pray for each child and family. Prayer should be from the time we sit down to prepare the lesson until we are teaching it.

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22:6).

Preparing the classroom

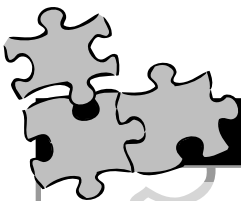
Finally, we will see how to create an environment for babies.



The classroom for babies should be a welcoming place, where they feel happy, comfortable and safe. It is very important that it is furnished and decorated appropriately according to the age of the little ones. Some recommendations to take into account are:

- Spaciousness: A room with enough space to play, move around and sing songs.
- Furniture: All furniture must be at the children's height (cribs, tables, chairs, rugs or cushions on the floor). Chalkboards to display visual material. Short lessons of no more than 15 minutes, always supported by visual material (photos, drawings, objects, puppets, etc.). Cupboard to store didactic materials and objects, such as puppets, plastic animals, paints, paper, etc.
- Safety and hygiene: Everything in the classroom should be safe and clean for little children.
- Cheerfulness: Use cheerful colors in the painting of walls, furniture and decoration.
- Climate: Bright and airy. If necessary heated or air-conditioned.
- Tidiness: Drawers at children's height to store musical instruments (sticks, tambourines, etc.) toys or others. Hooks for hanging children's clothes or personal belongings. They can be identified with animal figures, colors or other images.

The decoration, furniture and toys in classrooms for young children should be colorful and appropriate for each age group. We need to create a space that conveys joy and where the little ones feel happy and safe.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Children up to 3 years old are eager to learn, curious, imaginative and dynamic. They have the capacity to learn the rudiments of spiritual life if we design classes especially suited to their tastes and characteristics. In addition, it will be essential to involve the parents to work on common objectives for the spiritual development of the children.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Describe in your own words what children from 1 to 3 years old are like.

2. Describe three problems or situations that infants and their families face in your church and in your community.

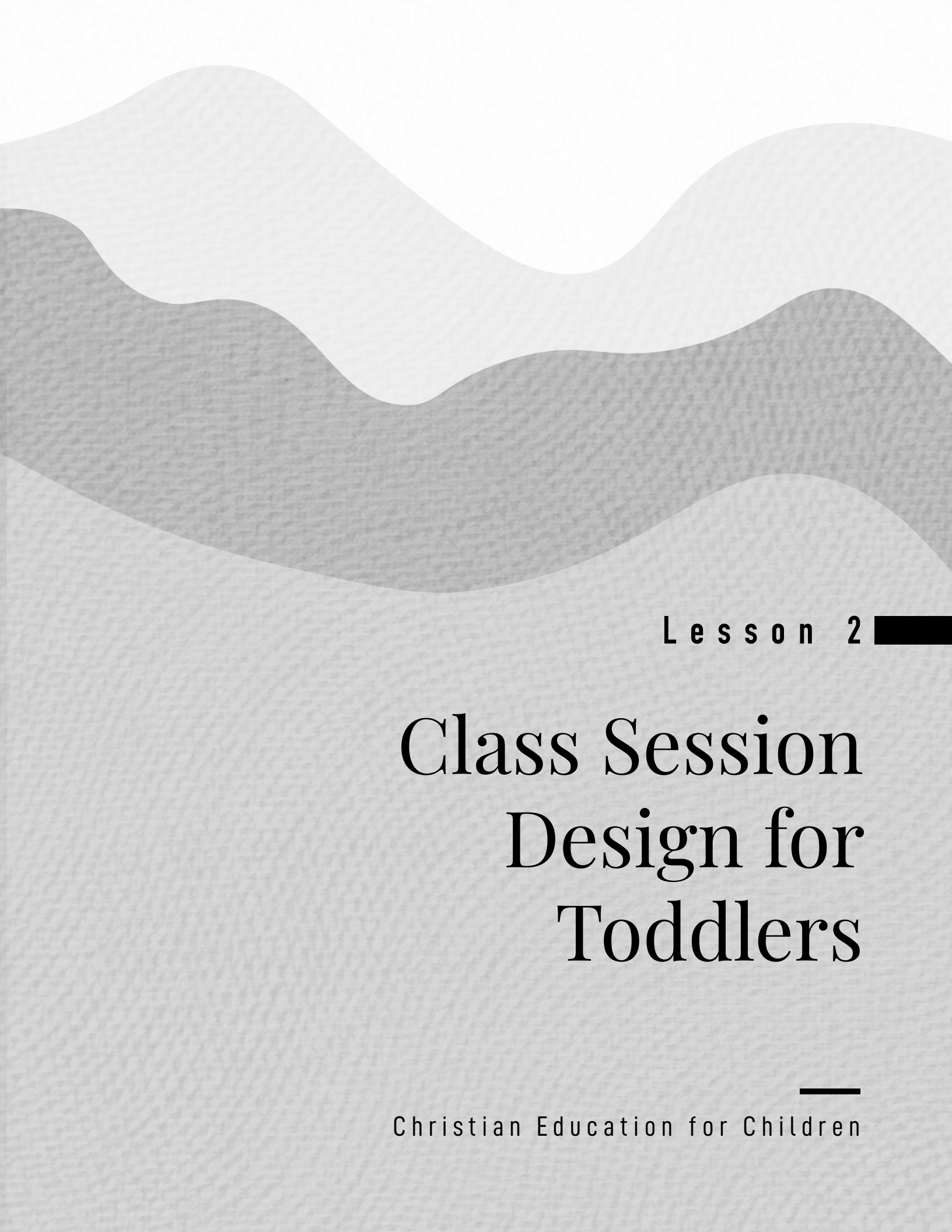
3. What are the most appropriate learning activities for 0 to 3 year old children?

4. In groups of 3 to 4 people answer: What actions can we take in Discipleship Ministries to involve parents in the spiritual development of infants?

5. In the same groups, think about the classroom that is currently used for the baby class. What would need to be done to improve its conditions? Using the table, evaluate the current state and develop a creative plan to adapt the room using available resources. In this plan, consider involving people with skills and gifts from the congregation, parents of the children, and people from the community.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Current Status</i>	<i>Changes Needed</i>	<i>Who can help?</i>
Spaciousness			
Furniture			
Safety and Hygiene			
Cheerfulness			
Climate			
Tidiness			

Notes



Lesson 2

Class Session Design for Toddlers

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- Plan the classroom time accordingly for children from 1 to 3.
- Select objectives, content and learning activities.
- Plan a class with all its elements.

Main Ideas

- When teaching the lesson to children, we should use short sentences, without excessive detail and with simple words.
 - Young children enjoy varied activities.
- In all classes we should include time for exploration and movement.

Introduction

In the previous lesson we saw that the children under 3 years old can pay attention for a very short period of time. We could limit it to a maximum of 5 minutes, or we could calculate one minute for each year of age. That is to say, for a 3 year old child, his attention time will be 3 minutes. If we offer him a well-organized, creative and attractive Bible lesson, we can capture a few more minutes of his attention.

We also saw that these children are naturally active, so keeping them seated for a long time will not be possible, nor will it make them feel at ease since they want to walk, explore, touch, discover, play, etc.

So, it is important to understand that "it is not that the child does not pay attention" or that "he is very active", it is just that by their nature, their attention spans are short and they are in a stage where they need to move around. Hence, the importance of designing the class beforehand and planning it minute by minute, including times for movement and taking advantage of their concentration time.

In this lesson we will learn how to plan a Bible lesson for children from 1 to 3 years old with all its elements.

Objectives and contents

We will begin by talking about the selection of objectives and topics.



Educating a child spiritually is both a ministry and a wonderful privilege. Little children are simple, authentic and humble. In time, we realize that they teach us more than we teach them.

Our general objectives for this age group will be:

1. To try to help them feel loved by God, by their family, and by us as their teachers.
2. To help them feel at ease in the church so that they enjoy coming to God's house where they feel safe, loved, content and happy.

How many minutes can a 2 to 3 year old child pay attention?

3. That they understand who God is and how to have a relationship with Him.
4. That they become aware that God is the creator of everything. That God made them and they are unique, special and perfect just as they are.
5. They can learn through stories about topics such as love, respect, obedience, faith, trust, prayer, etc.

As we study the lesson that we are going to teach each week, we should pray and ask for God's guidance so that each of the topics selected will be a blessing to both the child and their family, and will help them in their spiritual growth.

Whether the lesson is taken from the book we are using or prepared by ourselves, it will be necessary to look at the theme, the verses, the crafts, and the activities and adapt them to our group. When planning the class, we need to reflect on the needs of our students. We may need to change some words and replace them with others that the children can understand. We should not be afraid to modify what we need to modify in a way that suits our children.

In all classes we should include time for exploration and movement. Master classes or teacher lectures, where the adult talks and the child listens, are completely inappropriate for this age group. They only pay attention and learn when we allow them to be involved.

Another important aspect to take into account in the above planning is the feel and organization in the classroom. Offer them an organized environment, with everything in its place, materials and toys appropriate to their age and within their reach. We must put all our effort and creativity into making the classroom a comfortable, safe and happy place for the children.

In terms of lesson preparation, we will need to include the following items:

- ✓ Central topic.
- ✓ Specific topic
- ✓ Biblical passage
- ✓ Purpose or objective of the lesson.
- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Development of the lesson
- ✓ Conclusion or closure.

Let us remember that, when teaching the lesson to children we should use short sentences, without many details and with simple words.

It is best to plan the lessons several days in advance, for example, starting on Monday. In this way, we will have enough time to think about preparing the Bible story in simple words, planning creative activities, preparing the materials we are going to use, praying for the children and the objectives of the lesson. Then, we will be able to arrive on Sunday rested and without stress, being able to transmit calmness and dedicate all our energy to the little ones.

The distribution of time.

In this section we will study how to divide the time in the classroom.



Everything we do in the classroom, whether it is a song, a game, an activity, prayer, etc., should be aligned with the objectives and content of the Bible lesson for that day.

When planning what we are going to include in the class time, we must take into account that children have different learning styles. Some are more visual - that is, they learn by looking at pictures or with a puppet. Others are more kinesthetic - they grasp information by doing, touching and moving. And there are others who are more auditory - they like music, rhythm and rhymes. So, it is ideal that within our class time, we have a little bit of everything, and remember that young children generally enjoy a variety of activities.

We need to include a few minutes to explain the routine. It is important at this age to give them structure. By having a routine, they feel more secure and the class flows with more order since everyone knows what comes next after what they are doing at that moment.

The duration of a Bible class is usually 45 to 60 minutes.

For little children, a maximum of 45 minutes is recommended. Let's see an example of how to distribute the time in varied activities:

At this age children learn to pray at the same time they learn to speak. It is a great privilege for teachers to accompany them in their first steps as they discover how to communicate with their Creator.

Minutes	What the teacher does	What the children do
10	Welcome and greeting	"Explore" the classroom, get acquainted with the place. If possible, have toys that catch their attention so they can play for a few minutes while we are welcoming the other children.
3	Start with a short prayer.	They join in the prayer by closing their eyes and putting their hands together. It is important to create the habit of prayer and that this serves as the key for them to learn that we are starting with this activity.

2	<p>Explain the routine. Tell the children (hopefully with a routine chart, whiteboard or something visual) what they will be doing in this class. For example, "kids, now we are going to sing, and then we are going to learn a Bible Story with the help of this puppet friend. Then, we are going to color this sheet, and finally, we're going to play.</p>	They listen, they watch. Giving them structure from an early age is essential for them to feel safe and calm.
5	Songs related to the lesson. The teacher sings and models the movements.	They clap their hands, play a musical instrument, mime with their hands or with "choreography." They dance and move.
15	<p>Bible Lesson: Always use images, puppets or concrete elements. For example, if there are animals in the story, bring plastic or stuffed animals. If you talk about fruit, bring real fruit, etc. In this time, we also include the activities that we are going to do, whether it is a craft, a painting, a game, etc.</p>	They sit, listen, watch, touch, paint, play.
5	<p>Final review and closure: A short activity to review the topic and with this, we communicate to the children that the lesson is over.</p>	They listen, they watch.
5	<p>Pick up and good-bye: It is important to have them participate in the cleanliness of the classroom, asking them to help us pick up, while singing a goodbye song or something special at the time of leaving, so that this can be a fun and meaningful moment (a hug, bubbles, it could even be letting them play with something if they have time left). Create an expectation of something to look forward to each week at the end of class.</p>	They pick up, sing, play and say good-bye to the teacher.
Materials:		

The design of the learning activities

We will now continue to plan the age-appropriate activities.



What games do the 2 and 3 year old children you know like to play?

We can include a set of learning activities in classes for children from 1 to 3 years old, as long as they allow us to cover the following objectives:

1. Exploring: touching, feeling, smelling, making noise, knocking, discovering, observing, detailing.
2. Experimenting: testing, trial and error.
3. Repeating actions: putting in and taking out as many times as necessary, singing the same song for several weeks, knocking over the towers and putting them back together again and again.
4. Imitating: copying movements to a song or activity. Helping to hand out materials as the teacher does it, etc.
5. Moving: walking, dancing, going up and down, crawling, etc.
6. Sharing with peers: playing games, activities.
7. Time to be quiet: listening to the Bible story, watching a dramatization or pictures, playing games that motivate attention-concentration such as Legos, etc.
8. Singing with music, rhyming.
9. Time for prayer.

“From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise”
(Matthew 21:16).

Example of a biblical lesson plan for children

Finally, we will see a sample lesson plan with all its elements.



Central theme: The Lord is my shepherd.

Specific topic: God takes care of me.

Biblical reading: Psalm 23:1

Objective of the lesson: That the children understand the care that God has over their lives because He loves them.

Introduction.

Initial activities:

- Welcome and free play time with plastic sheep.
- Prayer, always with the song "I take out my one little hand, I put it to dance, I open it, I close it and I put it away again. I take out my other little hand, put it to dance, I open it, close it and I put it away again, I take out my two little hands, I put them to dance, I open them, I close them and I put them to pray".

Brief explanation of the routine.

- **Time to sing:** "Jehovah is my shepherd". Accompany the song with mime, instruments or clapping.

Development of activities

- Using paddle puppets: show the characters and explain the teaching.

For example: "This is David, he is a shepherd (show David's puppet). These are David's sheep (show several sheep puppets).

David is in charge of taking care of the sheep. He brings them food (showing paddle with grass or some carrots). He gives them water (show them a paddle with an image of a water container). He protects them from the wolf that wants to eat them (show wolf puppet and how David scares it away). He knows them (David's puppet, greeting the sheep by name: Hello, Little Cinnamon, it's good to see you, Spotty! He loves them (puppet of David kissing and hugging the sheep)."

Children are given a few minutes to see, touch and play with the puppets. Then continue to show the puppets:

"Just as David cares for the sheep, God cares for Mary, Camilla, Philip, Martin (name all the children in the class).

- Previously, before the beginning of the lesson, the teacher hides some pictures of sheep in the classroom so that each child can find a sheep. Give them the following instructions: "There are some sheep like these (showing the image) hidden all over the class; let's look for them and bring them here." As they search, encourage and motivate them, saying, "That's how God is with us. He always looks for us because we are important to Him. He doesn't like us to be lost. He helps us to be safe (they find the sheep and put them near David's puppet who is a shepherd). "God wants us to be close to Him so He can take care of us and give us love and everything we need."

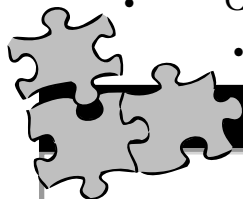
Closing activities

- Invite the children to color a sheep that will also have the verse, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalm 23). Take the opportunity to review that God loves them, cares for them and that they are important to Him.
- Collect the pencils or crayons, tidy up the table and indicate that they are about to finish.
- Farewell. They are given one of the little sheep they played with to take home, as well as the little sheet they colored.

List of materials:

- Bible (it is always good to have it available so that they can see that the stories and everything they learn comes from God's Word).
- Paddle puppets with the characters and elements of the story: David, sheep, wolf, food, water.
- Cotton sheep to hide all over the classroom.
- Sheep coloring sheets with the verse.
- Colored pencils or crayons.
- Music with the song for the introduction.

"Come with me, dear children; pay attention to me! I'm going to teach you to honor God"
(Psalm 34:11)



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

When planning lessons for 1 to 3 year old children, we must consider their short attention spans. Everything we do in the classroom should be aimed at achieving the goals we have set. What these children enjoy most are varied activities, games and body movements.

How to teach toddlers (from 1 - 3 years)

Physically	How to teach them
They are restless. They want to touch and grab everything. They get tired easily.	You must give them short, varied and challenging things to do as part of the teaching.
They are somewhat clumsy in their movements because their small muscles are not developed. They use only their large muscles.	Don't give them things they can break. Assign them tasks that are within their abilities. Use large, easy-to-handle materials. Simple craft activities, without demanding perfection.
They are nervous. They cry easily.	The program should run calmly and smoothly.
They get sick easily.	The room should be clean and well ventilated.
They are dependent on others because they are beginning to walk, talk and do other activities.	Give them help and understanding and be patient.

Mentally	How to teach them
Their attention span is limited to 3 to 4 minutes.	Give short, varied introductions (One minute for each year of age). Provide one thing at a time to get their attention.
They have limited knowledge and vocabulary.	Speak to them in simple language. Repeat many times.
They are imaginative, nice and receptive to suggestions.	Feed their imagination with pure and good ideas. Respect their "imaginary world". Accept their "pretend play" as such, without confusing them with lies or mistakes.
They learn by their senses.	Use things they can smell, touch and see.
They ask countless questions.	Try to answer each question patiently and clearly
They are very impressionable and gullible.	Tell them the truth and help them distinguish misconceptions.
They learn primarily through the senses.	Develop teaching-learning activities that involve an appropriate combination of the senses through exploring, investigating, experimenting and self-discovery.

Socially	How to teach them
They are selfish. Their world is small. They always say: me, mine and give to me.	Give them individual care and teach them to recognize the rights of others. Encourage activities where they have the opportunity to receive, give and share. Teach them that all those "things of theirs" are God-given.
They are stubborn.	Create an informal program of varied activities from which they can choose what to do, how to do it and when to do it.
They are shy.	Provide individual and small group attention until they are able to adjust to new situations.

Spiritually	How to teach them
They have a natural desire to worship God.	Inspire them to worship God. Give them spontaneous opportunities to find in the Bible's teachings the best patterns of behavior. They must know that God is able and willing to help them do their best. Help them understand the difference between good and evil.
They have natural confidence and absolute faith.	Teach them the truth. Show them that Jesus is their best friend.
They are beginning to differentiate between right and wrong.	Instruct them in the difference between good and evil. Offer them direction to find the best patterns of behavior in the teachings of the Bible.
They can begin to know God's book, the Bible.	Begin to teach them that the Bible is a special book.
They give easily.	Give them opportunities to give.
They can learn to pray.	Teach them to pray.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Plan a Bible lesson for 1 to 3 year olds, taking into account what you have learned. The general theme for the lesson will be: God created the animals.

2. Together with your classmates, brainstorm possible activities to develop in the planned class. Take note of new ideas that you can implement in your future lessons.

3. Think about your classroom and all that you have learned. Are the toys and teaching materials sufficient and appropriate for this age group or should the classroom be better equipped?

4. If you are already a teacher of this class, what would you like to implement from what you learned. For example: learn new songs and create a playlist.



Lesson 3

Characteristics of 4 and 5 year old children.

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- To know the physical and social characteristics of 4 and 5 year old children.
- To describe their learning styles.
- To prepare a suitable classroom for this stage.
- To involve the parents in their formation.

Main Ideas

- 4 and 5 year old children learn through games, their senses and active participation.
- In this stage of development between the ages of 4 and 5 years old, a transition takes place. They stop being babies and become big children.

Introduction

At this stage, a child's world is expanding. They become more independent and their questions are much more complex and deeper. They are full of insatiable curiosity, which leads them to be interested in topics such as death or what happened before they were born. They are also curious about specific topics such as dinosaurs or planets. These little ones require a lot of support and guidance from their parents and teachers since they experience a great change in their reasoning, being able to dialogue more as an adult would. In addition, they begin to experience fear, which is due to the fact that they still do not understand the world around them and they struggle to distinguish between what is real and what is imaginary, something they are trying to decode.

Everything they have experienced up to this point, what they have learned, the relationships with their families and people in society, have contributed to the formation of their personality. The first 3 years have been crucial for the development of the cognitive and emotional bases of the brain, and at 4 and 5 years, a great growth and maturation is already noticeable, making a difference from the previous stage. At the end of this stage, we see them and think, "they are no longer babies" and it is precisely at this stage that the transition takes place ... they stop being babies and become big children.

These children are more aware of their individuality. They don't want help to do anything. They question so many things that they may even want to "break" the rules or limits imposed by their parents or teachers, to see what happens next; or they want to argue about it, because "in their head" it's not the way they are told. They live a roller coaster of emotions; they cry because they don't want to take a bath and then they cry because they don't want to leave the bathroom. They get angry because we break their bread and they want us to put it back together again. They need adults full of empathy and respect to support them with love and patience, to teach them self-control, to identify their emotions and the causes of their anger.

Children between 4 and 5 years old feel autonomous and independent, yet they are still emotionally unstable. It could be said that they are like mini adolescents, so discipline will be a fundamental element in their upbringing. The attitudes of these little ones can cause adults to feel that

What movie do you remember that describes the characteristics of a child of this age?

they are challenging or ignoring them, but it is important to see this stage as something positive, as a normal and temporary phase in their growth. Although it is quite difficult, it means that they are developing in the right way. As we will see in this lesson, children at this age need the adults in their family and their teachers at church to guide them with love and patience, but also with firmness.

Physical skills of 4 and 5 year old children

In this section we will learn about the motor skills of these children.



At this stage of growth, children already have potentiated all their motor skills acquired in the previous stage, so they have great mastery of the movements of their whole body and balance; obviously this is not all, because they will develop new and much more complex skills. In gross motor skills, they are faster when running, jumping and other activities. In fine motor skills, they show greater coordination, mastery and control. They make more detailed drawings, and they can cut shapes more easily. Their brain is preparing to read and write. At 5 years old, motor skills are consolidated. Therefore, everything they have already achieved, improved and developed will be valuable skills for their future life.

Children are active by nature and now much more; they are tireless, with an admirable energy. At the end of the previous stage, they no longer took naps and do not stop for a second during the day. It is important to take advantage of this and provide them with opportunities to exercise: go for a walk, play sports, dance, climb trees or jump rope. In addition, as at all ages, it is important to ensure healthy rest, sleep and eating times.

In terms of language development, did you know that a 4 year old child can ask around 500 questions a day? And this is completely normal; it indicates that the child's brain is developing in the right way and she asks questions because this helps her to better understand what is going on in her environment.

Physical characteristics of 4 year old children

- They jump with rebound on one foot or the other.
- They jump long, trying to get from one point to another.
- When running, they can stop suddenly, avoiding obstacles. They can stand "on one foot" and keep their balance.
- They handle a pencil and scissors with precision, without much difficulty.
- They respect the edges of a sheet of paper when drawing.
- They can dress and undress themselves without help.
- They can button and unbutton, open and close zippers. They brush their teeth, wash their hands and face by themselves.

*How many questions
can a 4 year old ask during
the day?*

- They can draw a square.
- They can go to the bathroom by themselves without needing help at all.
- They can catch a bouncing ball.
- They like to talk to adults and are curious about everything. This explains the countless "why's?"
- They love riddles, jokes and word games, such as tongue twisters.
- They have difficulty conjugating verbs, for example: " I put it" here.
- They understand the plots or morals of simple stories.
- They make long sentences.
- They speak enough that everyone can understand them.

Symbolic play allows children to experience other worlds, activate their creativity and imagination, overcome fears and gain confidence, externalize behaviors learned through observation, and also stimulates the learning of new behaviors.

Physical characteristics of 5 year old children

- They can stand on one foot for 10 seconds or more.
- They can keep their balance with their eyes closed.
- They run faster.
- They walk accurately on a marked line on the floor.
- They throw farther.
- They jump rope.
- They can draw a triangle and copy other geometric shapes.
- They can draw a person with a body, head, arms and legs.
- They can write some letters.
- In some cases, their first teeth start to come out.
- They begin to learn to tie their shoelaces.
- They are very accurate at coloring.
- They speak clearly.
- They use the future tense.
- They are able to make jokes.
- They love new words and pay attention to "bad words."
- They can have a meaningful conversation with another person.
- They can tell a story without pictures.

Social characteristics.

Next, we will learn how 4 and 5 year old children communicate with each other.



As we mentioned in the previous lessons, in early childhood they go through different stages of game play, from parallel games with no interaction at all to symbolic games. This new level brings great benefits as it stimulates social relationships and helps them to learn more about the

world around them. They move from the real to the imaginary, starting by reproducing everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, among others. But they go further; at this stage they are able to create much more complex scenarios, turning a box into a spaceship and developing a whole super interesting story. These games go from being an individual activity to a social activity where two or more children participate, and they are completely "involved" in this imaginary situation where there are also rules and even a common goal. In this way, they develop social skills, teamwork, imagination and creativity.

Fears appear because children at this age are trying to discover the difference between the real and the imaginary. Monsters and nightmares appear, so they need adults to accompany them, providing explanations according to the questions they ask. It is important to allow children at this stage to express their fears and that we help to calm them, letting them know that we are there to protect them.

In the emotional area, at this age they can self-regulate more easily and show much more control when they are in front of other people. However, they will express themselves more intensely at home because it is their safe environment. Since they are already communicating clearly, they can recognize the different emotions they are experiencing.

Tantrums at this stage are intense because they go from global to specific emotions. Many of them are due to the desire for independence they experience, mainly when limits are placed on them (either to protect them from danger or to teach them the rules of the home or society).

They are leaving egocentrism behind and there is a clear sense of empathy; they begin to be more aware of others, so they show more sensitivity to other people's feelings. They also share, respect different points of view, solve problems by providing solutions, can wait their turn, among others.

Social characteristics in 4 year old children

- They are independent, they want to do everything by themselves. Mood swings are common.
- Suddenly, during these mood swings, they may become aggressive.
- Imaginary friends may appear.
- Fears increase and they may experience nightmares. They negotiate solutions to conflicts.
- They are aware that they can get hurt or that certain things hurt, so they are sensitive when it comes to their own body and concerned when they see another person or child in pain.
- They accept rules more easily.
- They like to feel approved by adults or friends, so they show off their skills to get attention.

*Fears and nightmares in children from 2 to 4 years old are a normal characteristic of their development since it is at this stage that children begin to discover that there are things that can harm them.
(Hunter).*

- They feel they are "big" children, and when they are with younger children, they care for them with special enthusiasm.
- They are able to hide their emotions in certain situations.
- They understand that their actions have consequences.

Social characteristics in 5 year old children

- They are developing the concept of " good" and " bad." They are more cooperative and responsible.
- They are interested in pleasing others. They have good manners.
- They see themselves as complete persons with body, mind and feelings.
- They realize that their friends can cheat in games.
- They love to be with their friends; they "find" their best friends with whom they share likes and interests.

How do 4 and 5 year old children learn?

In this section we will look at how to teach this group.



Children's brains will develop as we expose them to different sensory stimuli. The learning activities we plan should be attractive, interesting and fun for their stage of development so it will be much easier for them to learn.

How do children at this age learn? Through game play, there is no doubt about it, especially when they experiment with their senses and daily activities such as watering plants, cooking, sweeping, putting on their blouse, feeding their pet, among others. They learn better by imitating and repeating, with trial-and-error activities.

4 and 5 year old-children learn more through active participation. They like cooperative games, which we should take advantage of by guiding them in group activities that require the cooperation of several children.

Teachers should always take into account the children's previous knowledge to develop the lesson. For example, we cannot assume that all children know the sea or have ever visited a volcano, but we must illustrate the lessons with videos, photos, models, objects or images.

We should not focus on memorization, but rather on comprehension so that they can apply what they have learned in their daily lives. It is very important to recognize their achievements at this stage. They love to be complimented and this will motivate them to be more interested in the lesson and put into practice what they have learned.

Remember to keep in mind that all children are different and learn differently. Some are more visual, others more auditory and others learn using senses such as smell and touch and there are also those who prefer activities where they can move around. This is why we must know our students well and provide different learning options in each lesson. For example, in one section we can use visual aids, showing the image of the woman pouring the oil on

"One of the greatest changes we are going through has to do with technology.

Pupils, whatever their age, have mastered these resources.

Therefore, teachers cannot be left behind.

Teachers must be willing to continue to grow and incorporate new tools to help them optimize their work" (Ibarbalz and Gustaf, 2008, p.87).

Jesus' feet, but then we show a jar with oil (an object they can touch and smell), and we also have them listen to a song related to the theme.

As we have explained, at this stage we should minimize the times when children are only listeners and choose instead activities such as experiments, walks, crafts, etc., always taking into account their limited attention spans.

Finally, remember the importance of establishing classroom rules to cultivate an atmosphere of harmony and tidiness, something necessary at this stage.



Involving parents in the spiritual formation of their children

In this section we will define the responsibility of parents.

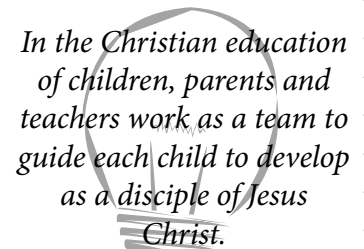


The involvement of parents in the spiritual formation of their children is essential to foster integral learning, because as we have said in previous lessons, it is at home where the grounds for the healthy development of children are laid. The family is the first and most important place, but the church has a great responsibility as well.

Teachers are significant people who complement the guidance of the parents, so they must have a close relationship and communication to achieve the goal. A good option is to send the lesson to the parents in advance with the objectives and topics to be covered, so that during the week they can pray, talk and study with their children about it and come to the class with previous knowledge.

Some ways to involve parents:

- Prepare simple devotionals for parents to do with their children at home.
- Invite parents from time to time to their children's church classes or children's worship and have them participate, either by bringing or serving a snack, playing a musical instrument, giving the lesson, among other ideas.
- Celebrate children's birthdays in class by decorating the classroom, bringing a gift (it does not need to be something expensive; the children will still enjoy it) and inviting the parents of the birthday honorees to participate in the prayer time and the celebration as such.
- Make phone calls (preferably) or send messages to the parents regularly to talk for a few minutes and pray for the family.
- Send home projects for the children on the topics covered in class, so that they can put them into practice at home, with the help of family members.



Preparing the classroom

Finally, we will see how to create an adequate space for 4 and 5 year old children.



It is important to have a classroom especially suited to the learning preferences of 4 and 5 year old children. The desired characteristics for this classroom are:

- **Spaciousness:** A classroom with enough space to play, move around, sing songs. As we mentioned before, at this stage children have an overdose of energy and need enough space to move freely.
- **Furnishings:** All furniture should be at the children's height (tables, chairs, carpet or cushions on the floor). A blackboard or a calendar with the class routine; it is essential since children need it and it gives them security to know what they are going to do and when, because although they are just learning the notion of time, they understand perfectly well that after the songs, for example, they are going to play, or after the prayer, they are going home with their parents. So, as soon as you start the class, you can go over the routine for that day so that the children feel at ease knowing what they are going to do. This will also help if there are new children, to lower their anxiety levels and prepare them for the lesson. A locker for storing your teaching materials and objects such as puppets, plastic animals, paints, paper, etc.
- **Safety and hygiene:** Everything in the classroom should be safe and clean for little children.
- **Cheerfulness:** Use cheerful colors in the painting of walls, furniture and decoration. It is essential to create an environment where children feel part of it. We can have a specific space, a wall with a mural, a decorated area like a window, or use the entrance door for the children to participate in the decoration, or a blackboard where they can display their drawings, their handprint, etc. This way, when they arrive each week, they will be able to see what they have done by themselves.
- **Climate:** Bright and airy. If necessary, heated or air-conditioned.
- **Tidiness:** Drawers at children's height to store musical instruments (drumsticks, tambourines, toys, etc.). Hooks for hanging clothes or personal belongings of children. They can be identified with animal figures, colors or other images.

The furniture in a preschool classroom must be adaptable to individual and group work. Preferably, the furniture should be made of durable wood with rounded edges and no edges or holes where children can put their fingers in and hurt themselves. Colors are important, so tables, chairs, drawers and cabinets can be painted in bright, eye-catching colors (blue, yellow, red, green, etc.).

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Children between 4 and 5 years old make a significant step forward in the different areas of their development, they become more independent and reflective, and they go from being babies to big kids. They still require guidance with the management of their emotions because they are very intense, but they are eager to learn and we must take advantage of that interest to guide them in their spiritual development.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Describe in your words what 4 and 5 year old children are like.

2. In groups of 3 to 4 describe the interests and concerns of parents and families of children of this age in your church and community. Then, come up with two or three ideas for activities you can do to engage families in the spiritual development of these children based on their interests and concerns for their little ones.

3. What are the most appropriate learning activities for 4 and 5 year olds?

4. In the same groups, think about the classroom that is currently used for the 4 and 5 year old class. What would need to be done to improve its conditions? Using the following chart, evaluate the current room and develop a creative plan to adapt the room using available resources. In this plan, consider involving people with skills and gifts from the congregation, parents of the children, and people from the community.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Current Status</i>	<i>Changes Needed</i>	<i>Who can help?</i>
Spaciousness			
Furniture			
Safety and Hygiene			
Cheerfulness			
Climate			
Tidiness			

Notes



Lesson 4

Class Session Design for Preschoolers

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- Select biblical learning objectives for 4 and 5 year olds.
- Design content to develop learning activities.
- Plan an interesting class for 4 and 5 year olds.

Main Ideas

- Bible lessons for 4 and 5 year olds should lead them to a true knowledge and understanding of God's Word.
- To design didactic activities for this age group, we must not forget that they learn by doing.

Introduction

4 and 5 year old children reproduce the behaviors and attitudes they see in adults. That is why we must be models of devotion to God, treat them with love, and speak the truth to them.

Four and five year old children love to ask "why" and "how" questions. We can take advantage of that to have super interesting conversations in class. They are curious about everything around them, and that includes God and everything we teach or tell them about Him.

Their imagination is wonderful, so by telling them a story we can almost magically help them enter Noah's ark or the lions' den with Daniel. This helps them enjoy biblical stories very much, which is why it is important that we know more details, because we are sure to be asked questions we can't even imagine.

They love anticipation; they will always be asking us what's next. So, it is better to build anticipation and to keep them calm. It is important that we take some time to show them the organization of the class; this will also cause them to look forward to a certain activity or game and they will not drive us crazy, asking every 5 minutes how much time is left for the craft or for the playtime, etc.

Just like the children in the previous lesson (and I dare say all children of all ages), it is important to accompany the lessons with songs, movement, exploration, experiments, games, pauses, visual support and colors.

Just remember that children learn by doing.

Objectives and content

First, we will see how to select objectives and topics.



"Objectives are the specific goals in terms of what you expect children to learn or practice after they have listened to the lesson" (Obrerofiel.com).

Learning objectives are the progress we want to see in children after a certain amount of time. When we write learning objectives, they should answer the following questions:

- ✓ What will children learn in this class period?
- ✓ What healthy habits should a child of this age put into practice?
- ✓ What values and attitudes do we want to form in them?
- ✓ What are the important skills that a child of this age should acquire?

For example, for a child of 4 and 5 years old it will be important to consider some of these objectives:

- ✓ Children should understand that Jesus is their friend.
- ✓ Children should learn to be thankful to God for what they receive from Him every day: family, food, shelter, pets, etc.
- ✓ Children should learn to play and share toys with their friends.
- ✓ Children should learn songs with motions.

When designing learning objectives, we must not forget the specific needs of our group. Let us also do this process prayerfully, trusting in the Lord's wisdom. He will guide us to offer our students the spiritual nourishment they need to reinforce, perform or learn.

Lesson Design

In this section we will learn how to write lessons for preschool children.



While in this lesson we are learning how to design Bible lessons for 4 and 5 year olds, the following principles apply to creating Bible lessons for all childhood stages.

When preparing the lesson, the study of the Bible passage is very important. We must make a deep study of the Scripture to study all the details: the characters of the story, the geography, the traditions in terms of clothing, food, work, worship, among others. All this information is necessary so that we can share the teaching with the children in a way that they can understand and assimilate.

For that, when we go deeper into the study of history, it is good to use a guide of questions like the ones below and write the answers down.

1. Characters: Who are the characters in this story?
2. Place: Where does the story take place? (Write down the names of the places and look them up on a map, look for pictures or drawings that you can use to illustrate.)
3. Historical and cultural context: When did this happen? How did they live? Look for illustrations or objects to show the children.
4. Plot: Describe how the events of the story unfolded: What? Why? How? In particular, try to put yourself in the characters' shoes: How did they feel? Describe their emotions. Imagine their gestures, tone of voice, etc.
5. Study the terms: What words or concepts are new to me or my students? Look up their meaning and write your own definition of each, with words, pictures or comparisons that the children can understand.
6. The story in context: Study what the Bible says about the theme, character or event.

“Objectives are specific goals for what you hope the children will learn or practice after listening to the lesson.

*What will children learn? How should they respond (in action, attitude, or thought)?”
(Obrerofiel.com)*

7. Main emphasis: What does this passage teach us, for my life and my students' lives? The story may have several teachings, but we should choose only one so that the children can assimilate it.
8. Application: What specific challenge could I give my students in terms of their attitude and behavior to apply the teaching of this passage?

Each of these details will enrich our knowledge about the subject. During the study, we should be thinking about how to illustrate or dramatize the story for the children. For example, we can use a costume from that time or use objects, drawings, videos, etc.

It is best to write the story as we are going to share it with the children. This way, we will have the opportunity to review the words and verbs we are going to use to make sure they are appropriate for the children in our class. We can also use colors to emphasize the special ideas we want while telling the story. A specialized page suggests that when writing the lesson, we take into account these tips:

"Look for verbs that you could represent with gestures or movements and underline them: fish, search, walk, knock on the door, etc. You can do these motions or have the children do them too as you tell the story. In your list of the events in the story, look for times when you can change your voice to keep attention or make the characters come alive and circle the key words. You can raise or lower your voice according to the emotions reflected in the story. You can also speak hoarsely, softly, make sounds of objects or actions, shout or whistle, etc." (Obrerofiel.com).

Children are curious. Everything is new to them and they want to know the why, how and for what of things. They get to know what surrounds them through their senses. Therefore, answer their many questions kindly and simply. Present the lesson in such a way that they can see, touch, smell, hear, taste and feel.

The distribution of time

Normally, for Sunday school classes at this stage, the total lesson time is 60 minutes.

Everything we do inside the classroom, whether it is a song, a game, an activity, prayer, everything must be aligned with the objectives and contents of the Bible lesson for that day.

When planning what we are going to include in the class time, we must take into account that children have different learning styles. Some are more visual - that is, they learn by observing images or with a puppet. Others are more kinesthetic - they grasp information by doing, touching and moving. Others are more auditory - they like music, rhythm and rhymes. So, it is ideal that within our class time we have a little bit of everything, and remember that little children generally enjoy a variety of activities.

We need to include a few minutes to explain the routine; it is important at this age to give them a structure. By having a routine, they feel more confident and the class flows in an organized way since everyone knows what comes next after what they are doing at that moment..

The duration of a Bible class is usually 45 to 60 minutes. For little children, we recommend classes of 45 minutes maximum. Let's see an example of how to distribute the time in varied activities:

Minutes	What the teacher does	What the children do
5	<p>Welcome and greeting: Give a general review of the structure of the class. It is important to have an outline with images previously ready and visible on a blackboard or poster. Anticipation is fundamental to keeping order and giving them security.</p>	They take their places, greet the teacher and other children.
10	<p>Begin the class with prayer requests and prayer.</p>	At this age, they love to speak and talk about their feelings. They are very empathetic, so they like to pray for others. It is important to give them the opportunity to express themselves.
15	<p>Introduce the lesson: Quickly mention the topic to be covered and the character (that is, something basic to give them an idea and build anticipation to capture their attention). Singing time. At least one of the songs should be related to the topic, and no more than 3 songs.</p>	They sing, imitate the teacher in the movements and play instruments.
25	<p>Bible lesson: Here, the lesson is carried out and the learning activities that are previously planned take place.</p>	They sit down. They work on crafts and activities to make the message meaningful and accomplish the proposed objectives.
5	<p>Closing and farewell activities: It is advisable to vary these activities in different classes. For example, repeat the key verse, a prayer or a quick game. Take a few minutes to tidy up the class. For example, "I loved seeing you and sharing today, you made a beautiful craft, you are artists, thank you for your cooperation and participation."</p>	<p>They participate in the closing activity.</p> <p>They tidy up the classroom.</p> <p>They say goodbye.</p>
Materials:		

What do the 4 or 5 year olds you know like to dress up as?

The design of learning activities

We will now continue to plan age-appropriate activities.



To design didactic activities for this age group, we must not forget that they learn by doing. In addition, these children are in a stage of independence in which they want to do everything on their own, so we must plan activities that they can do without help, unless they ask for it. For example: cutting, gluing, coloring, modeling or assembling objects.

At this age, fine motor skills are more precise, which gives them the opportunity to make more complex crafts.

They also like to participate in daily household activities. They love to help in the kitchen, for example, peeling a hard-boiled egg, slicing a banana, spreading things on bread. All household chores attract their attention, such as watering plants, folding laundry, sweeping, among others. This allows us, depending on the theme of the lesson, to plan activities of this type to complement the lesson.

They love to perform dramatizations as well. Their imagination and creativity are at their peak. Let's motivate them to participate by recreating the biblical story, learning a poem or adapting the passage to the present time.

Another characteristic we can incorporate is their empathy. They are in a stage where they are learning to regulate their emotions, so any lesson that deals with these topics will be very interesting to them. We can take the opportunity to work on relaxation techniques or invite them to think about what it would be like if they were the good Samaritan, for example, or if they were the man who was hurt, how would they feel, what would they do?

Since they love to talk, we can use methods such as brainstorming, round table, talking circles and other group work techniques, which are excellent choices. We can also take advantage of the fact that they like to compete, dividing them into teams to carry out activities in which they compete with each other.

Sample Bible lesson plan for 4 and 5 year olds

Finally, we will see an example of a class with all its elements.



Main topic: Joseph, the beloved son.

Specific topic: God has a wonderful plan for our lives. Bible passage: Genesis 37.

Memory Verse: "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." (Genesis 45:8a)

Lesson Objectives:

- To know that God uses even the difficult things that happen to us for our good.
- God is with us even when we go through difficult times.

At this stage, children lack skills. They handle their arms (large muscles) better than their hands (small muscles). Therefore, to provide them with the opportunity to train their fingers and hands, we should prepare activities with modeling clay or dough, sticks, boxes, lids, etc. The drawings to be colored should be large and simple. As they are very active, they like to march and sing with gestures, and they also enjoy dramatizing stories.

Introduction activities options:

- Welcome and free play time with plastic sheep. Starting the lesson with petitions and prayer, we can use rhymes like this: "All together let's pray, our hands to join and our eyes to close".
- Welcome and free play time with plastic sheep. Singing time: "Joseph, the Dreamer" (from Little Heroes), "Let All Children Praise" (from Amy and Andy) and "I Have a Very, Very Big God" (from Asaf Kids). All of these songs can be found on YouTube. Each of them has mimics and children can learn them from the videos or create one by themselves.

Developmental Activities

- Retell the Bible story. Use large, colorful pictures, as well as your voice and expressions. As you tell the story, ask the children questions. For example, "A long time ago, there was a young man named Joseph" (show the picture; you can also paste them on a board or wall). Then, describe the family: "his father's name was Jacob and he had 12 brothers." (Here, you can take the opportunity to show the picture and ask: "Do you have brothers and sisters? How many brothers and sisters do you have? What are your parents' names?" "Jacob loved his son Joseph very much and one day he gave him a very special colorful tunic". Now, ask them: "do you know what a tunic is?" Wait for answers while showing the picture. And so on, with the whole story.
- Craft: to reinforce, they will do a craft in which they will be given a photocopy of a black and white tunic. They will have to cut it out and decorate it with pieces of colored paper.

Closing activities

- Remove from the board all of the pictures that you used to tell the story and disorganize them. Then, the children will put in order the pictures according to what happened in the story. Each child will take a picture and with the teacher's help, they will place them in order while they review the lesson.
- Take a few minutes to clear the tables and leave the work area as tidy as possible.
- Farewell with the song "Joseph, the Dreamer".

List of materials

- Bible (it is always good to have it in sight so they can see that the stories and everything they learn come from the Word of God).
- Music with the songs from the introduction.
- Colorful, large-size pictures, representing the Bible story.
- Copy of the tunic, scissors, glue, colored paper.

When you were this age, how did you use your imagination in your games? What games did you enjoy?

Children at this stage are literal. Their vocabulary is limited, with 1500 to 2000 words, although it is increasing rapidly. They do not understand symbolic language. Therefore, we must use words that they know in our classes, in simple and short sentences, speaking clearly and without haste. As they like to talk, we can evaluate if they are understanding the words through simple questions.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

When planning classes for 4 and 5 year olds, we should do it by taking advantage of their curiosity and interest in helping others, their manual skills and their desire to express themselves by speaking. Everything we do in the classroom should be aimed at achieving the goals we have set. What these children enjoy most is learning new things, solving problems on their own, competitive games and activities where they use their imagination.

How to Teach Preschool Children (4 - 5 years)

Physically	How to teach them
They are still growing very fast. They are constantly very active.	Teach them stories. Teach them to march, to sing with gestures, to dramatize.
They lack skills. They handle their arms (large muscles) better than their hands (small muscles).	Provide them with opportunities to train their hands and fingers. Use play dough, sticks, boxes, etc. Illustrations should be large and simple.
They are very susceptible to infectious diseases.	Keep toys and furniture clean. Use a room with good ventilation. Instruct parents not to bring their children when they are sick.

Mentally	How to teach them
They are curious. Everything is new to them and they want to know the “why and how of everything.” They learn about their surroundings through their senses.	Answer their uncountable questions kindly and simply. Present the lesson in such a way that they can see, touch, smell, hear, taste and feel.
They are literal. Their vocabulary is limited, 1500 to 2000 words, although it is increasing rapidly. They do not understand symbolism at all.	Use words they know in simple sentences. Speak clearly and slowly. Avoid symbolic terms.
Their attention span is short. They get tired easily. It is difficult to keep their attention for more than 5 to 7 minutes.	Try to make them feel comfortable. Vary activities, alternating moments of movements with moments of stillness.
They are imaginative. They live in a fantasy world.	Use vivid storytelling, with gestures and noises instead of words whenever possible. Allow children to dramatize the lesson.

Socially	How to teach them
They tend to play with other children. They are no longer loners, but they prefer to join a small group of 2-5 children.	Give them freedom to choose who to play with and where to sit. Encourage them to cultivate relationships with everyone and enjoy playing with other children.
They are imitators. They do and say what they see and hear.	Be a good example for them.

Spiritually	How to teach them
They are unpredictable. They have the ability to know and worship God.	Stimulate their prayerful desires by cultivating reverence. Do all activities in a spirit of love and devotion so that the impact on them will be lasting.
They believe easily. They can learn to trust and love Jesus as they trust and love their parents.	Introduce them to Jesus as their best friend. Tell them the truth and encourage them to trust Jesus.

Activities

Time




INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Plan a Bible lesson for 4 to 5 year olds, taking into account what you have learned. The general theme for this lesson will be: Jesus is my friend.

2. Brainstorm with your partners possible activities to develop in the planned lesson. Take note of new ideas that you can apply in your future lessons.

3. In groups of 3 - 4 members, think about the classroom and everything you have learned. Are the toys and teaching materials sufficient and appropriate for this age group or should the classroom be better equipped? Make a list of everything that is needed and design a plan to raise funds to equip the classroom.

4. If you are already a teacher of this class, what would you like to apply from what you learned here? What changes would you like to make? What you would like to implement from now on?



Lesson 5

Characteristics of 6-9 year old children

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- To know the physical and social characteristics of children from 6 to 9 years old.
- To describe their learning styles.
- To prepare a classroom suitable for these ages.
- To involve parents in the spiritual formation of their children.

Main Ideas

- At this stage, some physical characteristics are developed in the area of sex, weight and height.
- Children between the ages of 6 and 9 are in a stage of knowing, recognizing and experiencing the things, beings and phenomena that surround them.

Introduction

In the stage from 6 to 9 years old, children start school. At the end of preschool, they start in the first grades of school where they experience new learning experiences that generate new challenges, which can mean adventure and motivation to explore more in the subjects they are discovering.

What did you like to play with when you were between 6 and 9 years old? Is it different from the games preferred by children in your community now?

Medina, S. et al. (2005) mention that this stage of childhood is called the "latency period" because it is characterized by the interaction of the infant with society. It is a stage where they make new friends.

In this growth period, there are many changes in the physical structure of the body. Muscle mass increases, bones become stronger, and the child is able to perform physical activities that require greater strength and skills.

The leaders of our churches, especially those who work with children, should know the characteristics of the physical development of children from 6 to 9 years old so they can take full advantage of the preparation time, execution and follow-up of the objectives that are intended to be taught in the discipleship classes.

In this lesson we will learn about the skills and social characteristics that children acquire at this stage and how they like to learn.

Physical skills of 6- 9 year olds

We will start by learning about the motor skills of these children.



At this stage, physical growth and development occurs at an increased rate. They are in constant movement and like to put their physical skills into action. Lateralization appears and they improve their fine and gross motor skills and even strength. Coordination and muscle control is perfected through motor and fine motor skills.

Medina, S. et al. (2005) mention that in terms of physical development, at this stage there are characteristics related to sex, weight and height that mark a difference from previous stages: "(...) males tend to gain weight and the gain in height is similar in boys and girls. Regarding body proportions, both boys and girls have a similar prevalence of adipose muscle tissue."

All of these features help children at this stage to achieve more complex body movements.

The brain also increases in complexity and it is highly sensitive to environmental influence.

Papalia, D. and Martorell, G, (2017) detail some important characteristics of middle-stage childhood:

- They perform better in precision movements in actions with greater complex challenges.
- They jump, run, throw, keep balance with greater precision.
- They participate in games with both sexes, anticipate and resolve situations through games.

Social characteristics of children 6 to 9 years old

Now we will study how children relate to each other at this age.



At this stage, children tend to develop independence to perform certain tasks. They always need support and guidance from the adults around them, but encouraging and supporting their skills or responsibilities will strengthen their self-esteem and reinforce them to look for solutions to what they face day by day.

As we saw before, they start to have contact with other people, which makes social learning occur involuntarily. They have greater abilities to learn, remember, relate to their peers to discover new friendships, and create new games.

It is important to keep in mind that at this stage they need activities that provide entertainment and fun, learning through observation and experimentation.

The development of language at this stage is more enriched, so the activities that are carried out with a training objective must have a wide range of vocabulary, which they can apply in their own lives and even train them to obtain an expression and understanding of what they feel and think.

It is also important that boundaries and rules are clearly established. Medina, S. and others (2005) mention that taking these aspects into account will help them to solve problems more easily, to understand their field of action with respect to the spaces of their peers, and to express what they think, want or feel according to what they are expected to do.

As in every stage of childhood, emotional intelligence must be considered; we must provide them with indications, instructions and explanations. The treatment must be with love, affection and above all, with respect. What they receive is what they will be learning to give later in their social relationships, whether in the community, church, school or family.

Children of this age group begin to interact with their peers in school spaces, which contributes to a greater maturity in their affective development. Egocentrism decreases to facilitate the social skills they need

Lateralization:

The development of laterality in children is very important as it enables their development as learners, the knowledge of their own bodies, and it also strengthens their spatial location. For example, children at this age will show preference for the use of the right or left hand, an important development for reading and writing.

“It is important to keep in mind that at this stage they need activities that provide them with entertainment and fun, learning through observation and experimentation.”

Learning values is essential for the healthy development of children.

In middle childhood they need to acquire values such as friendship, tolerance, understanding, patience, solidarity, respect, among others.

to participate in collaborative tasks, in team games, and even to begin to identify with their groups of friends.

Medina, S. and others (2005) indicate that in this stage the deepest feelings appear, such as solidarity, kindness, cooperativeness, loyalty and religiosity. This aspect should be taken into consideration by church leaders who work in classes or activities with children, since, apart from including physical movements, they should know that it is basic to guide healthy relationships through values and thus become true friends of their peers.

How do 6-9 year olds learn?

In this section we will study how to teach this target group.



What are the topics of most interest to the 6 to 9 year old children that you are familiar with?

Hernández, R. and Rodríguez, S. (2010) mention that the cognitive development of children at this stage begins with the interest that moves them to know everything that surrounds them. They are in a stage of knowing, recognizing and experiencing the things, beings and phenomena that surround them.

Children of this age group can perform mental operations, such as reasoning to solve concrete (real) problems and start to think logically, as they are able to consider multiple aspects of a problem or situation. They begin to connect what they learn to aspects of their own lives. All of this must be taken into consideration when we write the objectives that we intend to develop in a Bible class. That is, we must apply the new content and principles to the real world in which the children are living. For example, we can guide the conversation by means of questions so that they can propose ideas on how to apply what they have learned in their daily lives, thus applying meaningful learning.

At this stage, children learn through experience, so we can design activities that challenge them to use their anticipation, planning and resolution skills. In addition, they tend to have even more memorizing skills. Taking into account the children's prior learning about a topic will guide the teacher to create motivational activities at the beginning of the class to awaken interest or motivation for the topic to be taught.

In this stage, children experience a series of cognitive advances that are supported by changes in the structure and functioning of the brain. These advances increase the speed and efficiency of brain processes and improve the ability to detect the relevant information they are receiving. This represents an important aspect to develop topics and intentional activities to achieve new learning (Papalia, D. and Martorell, G. 2017).

Involving parents in children's education

Now we are going to study how to involve parents.



The role of parents in the spiritual formation of their children is essential. Early and middle childhood are valuable years for the sowing of the Word of God in the little ones' lives. In Proverbs 22:6, King Solomon advises parents to fulfill this mission with respect to their descendants:

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

This responsibility is also detailed in Deuteronomy 6:5-9, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your

strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

The Bible is clear about the responsibility of parents in the spiritual formation of their children, which should be on an ongoing basis along with daily activities.

Why is it so important for parents to be involved in the spiritual development of their children? Tren, J, Osborne R., and Bruner, K. (2003) answer this question with a list of reasons, some of which are listed below:

Children need:

- To learn and be guided to reach eternal life.
- To develop a personal and loving relationship with God.
- Guidance, wisdom and direction from God for their lives, as well as discipline, correction and forgiveness when they make mistakes.
- Strength and help from God in difficult times.
- Fortitude of character through their receptivity to the work of the Holy Spirit.
- To develop a grateful heart, a teachable spirit, an upright morality and a desire to improve as a person.

With these aspects in mind, here are some activities that church leaders can develop with parents who have children in this stage:

- Family activities such as competitions, bible quizzing, sports days.
- Family devotionals.
- Family Bible reading guides.
- Prayer times.
- Share a summary of the aspects that were developed in the class with their children so that they can review them during the week.

Preparing the classroom

Finally, we will see how to decorate the classroom for children of this age.



It is important to have a classroom especially suited to the learning preferences of children from 6 to 9 years old. The desired characteristics for this classroom are:

- **Spaciousness:** It is important to have enough space inside or outside the classroom where motor activities such as games, competitions, among others, can be developed.

*"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."
(Deuteronomy 6:5-9)*

How to decorate the room so that it conveys joy to children from 6 to 9 years old?

1. *Place posters or eye-catching photos in the available spaces.*
2. *Use the blackboard: date, photo of today's student helper, etc.*
3. *Daily routine: posters, pictures, calendars, etc.*
4. *Decorate the room according to the month, involving the children.*
5. *Rotate seating order: circle, horseshoe, team, individual, etc.*

- **Furniture:** The classroom can be organized by spaces or stations with clear objectives to be used in the course of each lesson, for example: prayer corner, art corner, treasure corner (this can be where the biblical theme is developed). Tables and chairs should enable small group work.
- **Hygiene and tidiness:** The space set aside to develop the class should be clean and organized. Children of this age can contribute to the order and cleanliness of the classroom.
- **Cheerfulness:** As in the smaller children's classrooms, the colors of the classroom should express joy, using cheerful colors in the painting of walls, furniture and in the decoration. We can use different colors for the spaces or seasons, with images that represent the purpose of each space.
- **Climate:** Bright and airy. If necessary heated or air-conditioned.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Children in the 6-9 year old stage are eager for new knowledge and they have a great ability to associate what they learn with their lives, to memorize, and learn from their own experience. Teachers can use games and other activities in their classes to stimulate cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual development.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Describe in your own words what children from ages 6 to 9 are like.

2. What are the most appropriate learning activities for 6–9 year old children? List some examples.

3. In groups of three to four, describe the interests and concerns of parents and families of children from this age group in your church and community. Then come up with two or three ideas for activities you can do to engage families in the spiritual development of these children, according to the interests and concerns they have for their children.

4. In the same groups, think about the classroom that is currently used for this group of children. What would need to be done to improve it? Using the following table, evaluate the current state and develop a creative plan to adapt the room using available resources. In this plan, consider involving people with skills and gifts from the congregation, parents of the children, and people from the community.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Current Status</i>	<i>Changes Needed</i>	<i>Who can help?</i>
Spaciousness			
Furniture			
Hygiene and tidiness			
Cheerfulness			
Climate			

Notes



Lesson 6

Class Session Design for Elementary Children

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- Prepare a lesson for groups of 6 to 9 year olds.
- Select objectives, contents and learning activities.
- Plan an interesting class through meaningful learning.

Main Ideas

- Elementary children understand well the difference between good and bad.
- They like to talk and ask questions, so be patient and answer them with simple words.
- They can learn to look up and start reading the stories and verses in the Bible.

Introduction

A class for 6-9 year old children does not begin when the children enter the classroom, but in the teacher's previous preparation process. The teacher's time before the class should be sufficient to cover several important aspects.

First, the lesson study should be done several days in advance. This will allow you to seek help or learn more about the topic you are going to develop. It is of utmost importance to be prepared to answer unexpected questions from the children.

Secondly, the design of the lesson should respond to the characteristics and interests of the children in your group. It is essential to take advantage of the class time to patiently listen to the children since their interventions will help you get to know them better and thus guide the lesson to achieve the objectives.

Without the above gestation process, our classes will not have the expected impact on the integral formation of the children. For this reason, in this lesson we are going to learn how to prepare Bible classes for elementary children.

Objectives and contents

First of all, we will see how to select objectives and topics.



The rules of the class should always be clear from the beginning. This makes it easier for them to develop the lesson in an organized way. We must relate the Bible study topics with the values we want to reinforce in the children.

Although the time for prayer and the study of the Word will be essential in our classes, we need to include a variety of activities, considering the different learning styles of the students. Individual activities, group activities and games can be included. The important thing is that these activities are always related to the topic of the lesson.

*The age at which children start elementary school is ideal for children to form the habit of reading the Bible.
Teachers and parents need to work together.*

We must not forget that in our class everything we do must be connected to the learning objectives. For this age group, the spiritual objectives should be centered on one or more of these aspects:

- To encourage children to want to come to church, to enjoy the worship time. To make it a joyful experience.
- To help the little ones grow in their relationship with God. Stimulate them to prayer and reverence.
- At this age, they can already understand the goodness of God in sending Jesus Christ, our Savior, and His daily care for them.
- The great stories of biblical "heroes" are special for them to understand that doing good and obeying God has a reward.
- It is also important to include activities that encourage good behavior, rewarding them for their positive attitudes, good actions with their classmates, etc. These children understand well the difference between good and bad.
- We need to stimulate the little ones' faith. Encourage them to pray for specific issues, concerning their family, friends or themselves.
- We can take advantage of their great imagination to achieve the objectives: painting, dressing up, dramatizing, creating motions to the songs, etc.

¿What would you do to motivate a child to come to church?

The distribution of time

In this section, we will learn how to manage lesson times for elementary children.



The teacher should be in the classroom at least 20 minutes before the class to be able to receive the children. It is important to prepare the classroom with materials that attract their attention and create questions and expectation in the children about the topic that is going to be developed.

Time management is extremely important. It is necessary to plan in advance what will happen at each moment of the class. Therefore, the teacher should be clear about the time that is determined at the local church level for the development of the classes, which in most churches is usually 60 minutes.

When planning what to include in the class time, we must take into account that children have different learning styles and little children generally enjoy a variety of activities.

Let's look at an example of how to divide time into varied activities:

The attention span of a child between 6 and 9 years old to listen to a story is about 8 to 10 minutes

Minutes	What the teacher does	What the children do
5	Welcome and greeting: Take the opportunity to give a general review of the structure of the class. It is important to have an outline with images and words previously ready and visible on a blackboard or poster. Anticipation is key to maintain order and give them security.	They take their places, greet the teacher and other children.
10	Beginning of the class: Prayer requests and prayer	This age group loves to talk and tell about their feelings; they are very empathetic, so they like to pray for others. It is important to give them the opportunity to express themselves.
15	Starting activity: Motivation, Singing	They sing, they can read a short Bible verse.
20	Bible lesson: Here, the lesson is developed and some learning activities, planned in advance, are carried out.	Include time for children to ask questions (answer in simple language). They sit down. Work on different activities: drawing, writing, cutting, coloring, dramatizing, problem solving, etc.
5	Closing and reinforcement activities: It is advisable to vary these activities in different classes. For example, repeat the key verse, a prayer, a quick game, etc. Take a few minutes to congratulate them on their good behavior and work.	They participate in the closing activity. Tidy up the classroom. Say goodbye.
5	Final prayer and farewell	
Materials:		

The design of learning activities

We will now continue to plan age-appropriate activities.



To start the lesson, we need to prepare an activity that generates motivation or questions about the topic to be studied. The previous study of the lesson and the students' knowledge will help the teacher to link the information they have with the subject to be taught.

When developing the lesson, it is important to read the story or some portions of it from the Bible. This age group can already learn to search and read in their bibles, although they are still initiating the reading process. This will help them to know the importance of studying the Bible.

When the teacher presents the lesson, it is important to vary the presentation styles using videos, songs, images, stories, dramatizations, posters, murals, costumes, characterizations, objects, among others. We can also include different activities such as games, written tasks, competitions, challenges, group or individual work.

We must not forget our children's preferences in terms of learning styles. By taking into consideration the different ways of perceiving information (visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile) we will design classes where learning is accessible to all.

The closing activity is very important; it summarizes the main aspects of the lesson and what has been learned so that it can be applied in each child's life. This part can be done through guided games and questions previously prepared by the leader. There should also be a space for each participant to explain in their own words what they have learned. Another option is to give a challenge related to the lesson and ask them to complete it during the week, and it is always important that parents know about this challenge so that they can provide follow-up and support.

Finally, when preparing the materials, you should keep in mind the number of children that usually come to the class and always bring additional material in case more children arrive.

It is important at this age, when they are learning to read more fluently, that children have their own Bibles in simple language. Parents should work with the children to teach them to be responsible for bringing their Bibles to church and taking care of them.

Example of a lesson for Elementary Children

Finally, we will see the development of a class with all its elements.



Theme: Daniel teaches me to be respectful and faithful.

Biblical text: Daniel in the lions' den: Daniel 6:1-23.

Verse to memorize: *Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors, (Deuteronomy 6:18 NIV).*

What are the most appropriate Bible versions or translations to use in classes with children?

Objectives:

- Recognizing the value of respect for my neighbor.
- Learning the importance of being faithful to God at all times.

Starting Activities:

Starter Activity:

- Welcome each child.
- Give them a puppet with a lion image as they enter.
- For the opening prayer, mention that they should hold up the paddle puppet to say the petition or to thank God.
- Two songs, e.g., from the YouTube channel
- After the song, they are invited to participate by mentioning ideas that can be taken from the song about the biblical character to be studied.

Developmental activities:

- Show videos or images where real lions appear to make them aware of what Daniel really faced.
- Ask them the question: Do you think there is a story in the Bible where God protected Daniel from lions?
- With the Bible in the teacher's hand they will read the biblical text: Daniel 6:1-23.

The Story Outline:

- Daniel loved God very much and prayed constantly to Him.
- He was a man who greatly respected people regardless of age or position. He was a man of easy trust, but there were people who wanted to harm him. Those people convinced the king to make a law stating that only the king of the moment could be prayed to and if anyone worshipped or prayed to another king, he would be thrown into the lions' den.
- Daniel knew of this law but he continued to pray to God.
- The evil men noticed that Daniel kept praying to God and they told the king. The king regretted making that law because he appreciated Daniel, but since he did make the law, he had to send Daniel to the lion's den, hoping that his God would protect him.
- Daniel was protected by God while in the midst of the lions; he did not lose faith and remained faithful to the trust he had in God.

Ludic activity:
refers to activities that allow learning through play. By interacting with other children through play, children develop skills to plan, organize, lead and relate to others.

How to teach elementary children (6-9 years)

Physically	How to teach them
Their growth rates slows down, but they are very active.	Teach them to focus their excess energy in activities, such as walks, physical exercises, games, dramatizations, etc.
They get tired easily.	Vary the program with stories, worship and quiet activities.
They use their hands and fingers (minor muscles) much better.	Do simple crafts that use pencils, crayons and scissors
They always want to be doing something. They like vigorous activity.	Provide activities such as running and playing. Allow them to take part in a drama.
They are independent. They can now perform some actions on their own such as dressing themselves, eating, bathing, brushing their hair, etc.	Allow them to help organize the room or participate in the program.
Mentally	How to teach them
They are learning and like to read and write. They can copy more easily.	Answer their many questions kindly and simply. Present the lesson in such a way that they can see, touch, smell, hear, taste and feel.
They have a longer attention span. They can hold their attention on a story for 8-10 minutes.	Use words they know, in simple statements. Speak clearly and slowly. Avoid symbolic terms.
They begin to reason and think for themselves. They often come to wrong conclusions.	Try to make them feel comfortable. Vary activities, alternating moments of movement with moments of stillness
They have an active imagination.	Use vivid storytelling, with gestures and noises instead of words when possible. Allow children to dramatize the lesson.
They are curious, interested in exploring their surroundings, in trying things out.	Plan activities that include such things.
They have a very good memory. They can learn verses and short passages.	Help them memorize Bible verses.
They have no idea of dates in chronological order or places.	Avoid using chronology or maps.
Socially	How to teach them
They play with others.	Promote social activities. Encourage them to work in groups.
They talk about their interests.	Provide opportunities for expression and conversation in class.
They want to be like adults.	Give them the opportunity to develop. Pay attention to them.
They respect authority.	Demand classroom discipline and submission to Jesus..
Spiritually	How to teach them
They like to go to Sunday School class.	Do the activities with true joy and praise.
They feel closeness to God. They pray as if they were talking to a real person.	Encourage them by cultivating reverence.
They can see the goodness of God in providing a Savior.	Teach them God's love and care for them.
They have a natural impulse to do things right and to behave well, as if they were doing it for God.	Emphasize the great facts of the Bible and encourage their good behavior.
They understand the difference between right & wrong.	Reward them well and be firm.
They react with faith. They believe easily.	Teach them the truth.
They have an active imagination.	Use it to help them know God.
They ask a lot of questions.	Answer their questions with simple vocabulary.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare a lesson for 6 to 9 year olds, taking into account what has been learned. The general theme for the lesson will be: Joseph, a good brother.

2. In groups of 3 to 4, propose an idea on the following: How would you present the plan of salvation to 6 to 9 year olds?

3. In the same groups, think about the classroom and all that has been learned. Are the toys and didactic materials sufficient and adequate for this age group or should the classroom be better equipped? Make a list of everything that is needed and design a plan to raise funds to cover this need.

4. If you are already a teacher of this class, what would you like to implement from what you learned? What changes would you like to make from now on?



Lesson 7

Characteristics of children from 10 to 12 years old

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- To identify the physical and social aptitudes of children 10 to 12 years old.
- To know the cognitive changes of this age group.
- To prepare a suitable classroom for them.
- Team up with parents for the spiritual formation of their children.

Main Ideas

- In this stage between 10 and 12 years old, children experience accelerated growth with great changes in their physical, spiritual and cognitive areas.
- The influence of the social group becomes more and more relevant at this age.

Introduction

Children of this age group enter a new phase in their development: adolescence. These are years that are accompanied by changes in all aspects of life. They experience an accelerated growth in the physical, spiritual and cognitive areas. This can be an exciting, but also a disturbing period, as they discover their new abilities and walk the path that will lead them to independence and autonomy from their elders.

The church, and especially youth leaders and teachers of these groups, must become aware of the important role they play in the formation of adolescents. These children, who are in a transformation process, need spiritual leaders to accompany, support and guide them as they go through this stage. This is undoubtedly a decisive stage where they will embrace many of the principles and values that will influence the decisions they will make in their future and that will have an impact on the rest of their lives. One of these decisions, the most important one, is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and to commit themselves to God's mission in this world.

In this lesson, we will go into more detail about the characteristics of children between the ages of 10 and 12 so that we can better understand them and plan our Bible classes with well-directed objectives.

We will learn how to awaken in them an interest in learning more of the Word, but also how to guide them so that they can make decisions that will lead them to a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ for the rest of their lives.

A period of great changes

We will start by learning about this stage of development.



Valverde, O et al. (2001) incorporate four transcendental aspects in the process of adolescent development, which they describe as the rebuilding of identity, the integration of a new body schema, the consolidation of cognitive development and the formation of future life projects.

Adolescence:

Adolescence constitutes a bridging stage in which childish behaviors and attitudes are abandoned to move towards forming the identity of a young individual.

√ Early adolescence: 10-13 years.

√ Middle adolescence: 14-17 years.

√ Late adolescence: 18-21 years.

MAIN ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

Identity
Reconstruction

Integration
of a New
Body Schema

Consolidation
of Cognitive
Development.

Formation of
Future Life
Projects

The church must see the children who are in this stage as people with great potential and capabilities who can become agents of social and individual change.

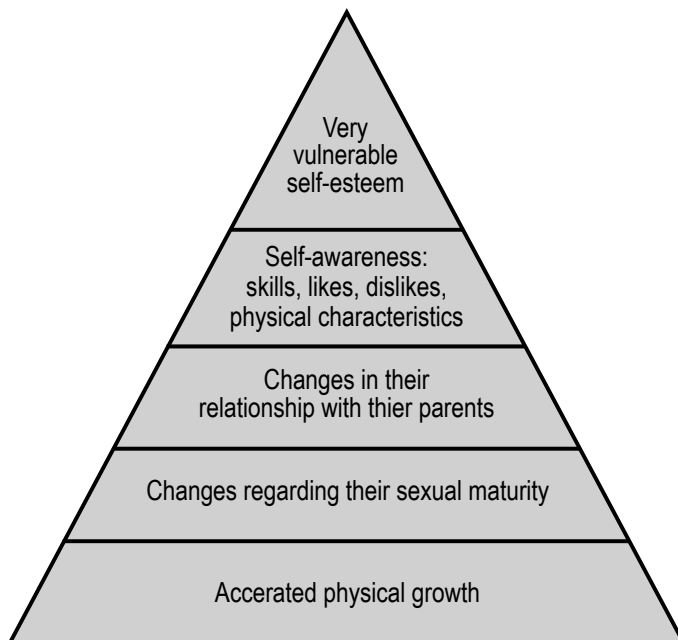
The development of self-awareness of their abilities will lead to the formation of leaders for the church and society.

Trent, J. Osborne, R. and Bruner, K. (2003) affirm that during this stage, children should learn the importance of submitting to God. This is achieved through learning the Bible and learning to value the Word of God as a guide for making life decisions.

It is in this stage that children enter the period called "early adolescence" which is between 10 and 13 years old. Valverde et al. (2001) describe the characteristics of this age group:

Adolescents follow a leader; they are attracted to belong to a peer group, so if the teacher wins over the leaders of these groups, she will also win over their followers.

MAJOR CHANGES IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE



Physical and social characteristics of children from 10 to 12 years old

In this section we will study the bodily and relational changes in this age group.



Between the ages of 10 and 12, children go through major physical changes. They need a safe and trusting environment where they can ask questions and talk freely about their doubts and concerns.

During this stage, there are important physical changes, which are evident earlier in girls than in boys. The accelerated growth is accompanied by maturational changes that coincide with the process of sexual maturation.

Major changes also occur in the area of relationships. Trent, J, Osborne, R. and Bruner, K. (2003), explain that preadolescents give special value to their friends and that these values are developed through interaction. Social groups become more relevant, and it is in relation to these groups that they develop a sense of loyalty. Hence, the importance of creating spaces in the church to foster friendly relationships among children and with their Christian leaders.

They tend to follow a leader, so the teacher should seek their commitment in order to win their followers.

In terms of physical skills, they are interested in working on manual projects. They are active, like competitions, enjoy team games and hobbies, have a good memory, and like to collect things.

They are aware of other people's needs and they are interested in them. They can solve problems and conflicts, which is important for them to learn to be fair and make decisions based on Christian principles and values. Teachers should be role models in making fair and impartial decisions.

How 10-12 year olds learn

In this section we will study how to teach this target group.



In this period, the development of logic and reasoning becomes part of their daily lives. They begin to have the ability to associate abstract concepts with their life experiences.

The physical and mental development is noticed in an accelerated way, where the stimulation of critical thinking, analysis and application for life is vital.

They start to associate the information they are given with their life experiences and they are able to apply the Christian values that have been taught to them.

These characteristics allow teachers to plan learning activities oriented to:

- Understanding the changes they are going through at this stage of their development.
- Dialoguing in gender groups about these changes, freely and confidently.

*Your hands made me
and formed me; give me
understanding to learn
your commands.
(Psalm 119:73)*

- Understanding the meaning of symbols and figurative terms in the Bible.
- Finding in the Word, by themselves, the answers to the situations of their lives.
- Cultivating good habits, such as punctuality and the joy that comes from well-done work.
- Discovering Jesus as their best friend and model of friendship.
- Doing group projects.
- Competencies focused on developing good habits and values.
- Inviting them to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord, making a commitment to follow Him on the path of discipleship.
- Planing classes that satisfy their hunger for God.
- Affirming their self-esteem, trusting that God has designed them for a special purpose.
- Imparting security and hope about the future, trusting in God's plan for their lives.
- Activities to discover their gifts and talents for a profession, service or ministry that is unique and relevant to God's mission.

Pre-teens have the capacity to repent of their sin and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Many are mature enough to be discipled and baptized.

Involving parents in the spiritual formation of their children

Now let's look at how to involve parents.



Parents have a God-delegated responsibility to form their children as disciples of Jesus. Instilling the values of the Kingdom of God in them is paramount so that they can apply these values to any situation in their lives. This is not the task of pastors and teachers alone, but is the result of teamwork between parents and church leaders.

In the transition to adolescence, the approach, communication and confidence of parents and teachers with teenagers is the foundation on which independence is built and strengthened. Adolescents need loving relationships that reinforce their self-esteem, self-confidence and faith in God in order to make decisions about their future lives.

They need to assume responsibility and understand the advantages of having discipline to achieve their goals and to develop their gifts and abilities. This includes, above all, understanding that they must make commitments to their own spiritual development as disciples of Jesus.

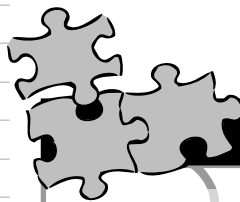
At this age...
what example do pre-teens
need to see in their parents
in order to develop as
young people and become
faithful adults?

Trent, J. Osborne, R. and Bruner, K. (2003) make these recommendations to prepare children to make decisions and strengthen their spiritual life:

- Encourage them to accept more responsibility in a gradual way.
- Remind them of the importance of having times with God, and help them plan such times.
- Show them how to find answers in God's Word.
- Encourage them to participate in church activities.
- Expose them to situations outside their Christian bubble so that they can discern and discover how to respond or what to do from their Christian formation.
- Discuss what they are learning and applying it to their lives.

Here are some goals that parents of teenagers may have for their child:

- To be able to pray alone on a daily basis.
- Read the Bible intentionally and discover at least one teaching for life.
- Worship God individually and in groups.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

In early adolescence, children go through great changes. Parents and teachers have a great opportunity to guide them as they walk into adulthood, embracing the values of the Kingdom and committed to follow Jesus as disciples.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Describe in your own words what 10-12 year olds are like.

2. ¿What are the most appropriate learning activities for 10–12 year olds? List some examples.

3. In groups of 3-4 brainstorm activities that we could organize as a church to foster relationships and communication between pre-teens and their parents. For example, an outdoor picnic day where children team up with their parents in competitions.

4. In the same groups, think about the classroom that is currently used for these children. What would need to be done to make them more comfortable? Using the following chart, evaluate the current state and develop a creative plan to adapt the room using available resources. In this plan, consider involving people with abilities and gifts from the congregation, the children, their parents, and people from the community.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Current state</i>	<i>Changes needed</i>	<i>Who can help?</i>
Spaciousness			
Furnishings			
Hygiene and Tidiness			
Cheerfulness			
Climate			

Notes



Lesson 8

Class Session Design for Preadolescents

Christian Education for Children

Objectives

- Preparing a lesson for adolescents from 10 to 12 years old.
- Learning to plan varied and creative learning activities.
- Directing objectives toward spiritual development goals.

Do you remember a teacher or leader who impacted your life when you were that age? What could you learn from this experience?

Main Ideas

- At this stage it is important to develop analytical and critical thinking skills in the children.
- Pre-teens need to accept Jesus as their personal savior. To do this, we must present the plan of salvation in a simple way.

Introduction

Lessons for children in early adolescence should be planned with a lot of dedication. In this age group, students get bored very easily, especially if the lessons are repetitive and if the topics to be studied do not provide them with new knowledge.

The most effective teachers for this age group are those who design interesting classes, creatively taking advantage of the resources available to them to vary activities, materials and visual aids.

Children at this stage need to be encouraged to make decisions about their relationship with God, as they will be influenced more and more by other kids of their age, in their school, on social networks and in the media. There are many teenagers who leave the church, which is why we need to direct all our efforts so that pre-teens have the opportunity to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior and commit themselves as His disciples. To achieve this goal, it will be essential to work as a team between teachers, parents, pastoral leadership and youth leadership of the church.

In this lesson we will study how to plan engaging lessons and interesting learning activities for pre-teens.

Objectives and contents

First, we will see how to select objectives and topics.



In this transitional stage in which children are moving from dependence to independence, they need to be guided through the teaching of the Word of God in a clear and meaningful way to strengthen their faith. Objectives in Bible classes should be directed to what is intended to reinforce in spiritual formation.

For our classes and also for each lesson we should outline long-term objectives. Among these goals we can include the following:

- To understand that Jesus Christ is the only Savior who can cleanse us from sin.
- To accept Jesus as our personal Savior. To do this, we must present the plan of salvation in a simple way.

- To cultivate an intimate relationship of friendship with the Heavenly Father.
- To learn to value God's creative work in pre-teens, recognizing their gifts and potential to serve God and their neighbors.
- To learn more about God and His attributes (love, justice, holiness, grace, among others).
- Learn from the stories of the Bible, associating the characters with themselves and the situations in which they live.
- Acquire healthy habits for their spiritual formation and Christian life (attend worship services, worship with God's people, learn in a group or cell group, serve others, learn from the Bible daily, pray, invite friends to church, etc.).

For example, "getting into the habit of daily Bible reading and prayer" is a long-term objective that could cover the classes for a full trimester. In this trimester, topics related to the Bible, its formation and importance for the Christian life will be studied. In addition, lessons on prayer will be taught, especially stories about how God answered the prayer of His children.

In each class, the long-term objective is reinforced, which is evaluated through questions and dialogue, to measure how the children are carrying out this habit on a daily basis. In order to supervise the application, communication with parents and their involvement is very important. Their example and guidance will be very helpful for the children to establish these routines, which are essential for their spiritual formation.

For teenagers, friendship is very important. That is why at this stage, it is essential that they learn to know Jesus and interact with Him. He is their best friend and the greatest example of friendship.

Time distribution

In this section we will learn how to manage time in the classroom.



When planning the time for each activity, we must calculate the children's interventions and questions, which we must listen to with a lot of patience and interest. Their comments will help us evaluate how they are understanding and applying what they are learning.

The teacher should plan their class within the time assigned in the local church's program. In the case of 60-minute lessons, we recommend the following time allocation.

Blessed is the one you discipline, LORD, the one you teach from your law. (Psalm 94:12).

Surprise your students every class with something new and in a different order. Pre-teens get bored if they are taught things they already know and if the lesson plan is always the same. Their maximum attention span for listening to the teacher is 15 minutes.

Minutes	What the teacher does	What the children do
5	Welcome and greeting: In addition to giving a general overview of the class structure, it is important to create expectations about the topic to be studied.	They take their places, greet the teacher and other children. They can share how they applied what they learned during the week.
10	Beginning of the class: Prayer requests and prayer.	They can pray. Teach them to talk to God as they talk to a friend, but with reverence.
15	Starting activity: Motivation and singing.	They sing, they can read a short Bible verse or discover the text by arranging the words on the board or tables.
20	Bible lesson: Here the lesson is developed and the learning activities, previously planned, are carried out.	Include time for children to ask questions. (Answer in simple language.) They sit. They work on activities: drawing, writing, cutting, coloring, dramatizing, solving problems, etc. They work individually and in teams.
5	Closing and reinforcement activities. It is advisable to vary these activities in different classes. For example, memorizing the key verse, a prayer, a class sorting competition between boys and girls, etc. Take a few minutes to congratulate or reward them for their achievements.	They participate in the closing activity. They tidy up the classroom and say goodbye.
Materials:		

The design of learning activities

We will now continue to plan age-appropriate activities.



Prior preparation by the teacher is key to good planning. The lesson study should be done several days in advance. This will give you time to do more research on the topic you are going to develop and be prepared to answer questions from your class.

Keep in mind the average number of children attending the class and always bring extra material in case new children come.

To prepare the classroom environment, it is important to take into account several aspects:

- The space that is intended for the class should be clean and in order.
- It is necessary to have a place where motor activities such as games can be done.
- The teacher should be in the classroom at least 20 minutes before the class in order to receive the children.
- It is important to display in the classroom some materials that attract attention to generate questions about the topic to be developed (poster, objects, etc.).
- The classroom can be organized by spaces or corners, with clear objectives to be used in the lessons, for example: the prayer corner, art corner, treasure corner (this can be where the biblical theme is developed).

The starter activity is essential to gain interest and create expectation about the topic. A question guide can be used to encourage children to talk about what they know about the topic. This activity will help the teacher learn about the children's prior knowledge and provide guidelines for linking what they already know with what they will be studying.

Class rules should always be clear from the beginning; this will facilitate an orderly development of the planned activities. Agreements can be established as a group to develop the awareness that they can contribute to their group with appropriate behaviors.

For pre-adolescents, learning activities can be planned individually, in groups and through games. The important thing is that these activities are always related to the objectives and the topic being developed.

In order to stimulate learning, different techniques must be included in the different moments of the class, taking into account the different learning styles of the children (visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile). In this way, we will make learning accessible to all. Developing strategies that stimulate all the senses promotes meaningful learning. When the teacher presents the lesson, it is important to use different forms of presentation: videos, songs, images, stories, dramatizations, and murals.

For the closing activity, the important aspects of the lesson are included, such as: the objective, the important facts of the lesson (such as the characters and the message) and how to apply it to life. It is important at this point to guide the children to become aware of what they have learned and apply it to their lives. This part can be done through guided games and questions previously prepared by the leader. There should also be a space for each child to express in their own words what they have learned. The fact that they express it in their own words shows that they have processed the information from their reality and that this can be a significant learning experience.

You can also give a challenge related to the lesson for them to do during the week and it is always important that parents know about it, so that they can provide follow-up and support.

Pre-teens love to discover the answers for themselves. Challenge them to find the answers in the Bible, solve problems in groups, solve puzzles, give their opinion on an issue, ask and answer questions, etc.

Some activities that children can do at this age are:

- Answering questions in teams. For example, "Why and what do you think the topic of the lesson is important for?"
- Group activities such as forums, debates, solving daily life situations by applying Bible stories or verses.
- Read the story from the Bible as the lesson unfolds.
- Strengthening the search for stories and verses in the Bible is important.
- Underline verses that they like or felt that spoke to them regarding the situation they are in. This will help them become aware of the Word's application to their lives.
- Games, written activities, competitions, challenges, group or individual work.
- At this stage, you can promote the use of a journal where they can write down the teaching they had in class and then, during the week, they could write down the situations where they were able to apply it. Through this activity, they learn to be alert and apply what they have assimilated in their daily experiences.

Sample lesson for pre-teens

Finally, we will see how to develop a class with all its elements.



Theme: To obey or not, that is my dilemma.

Bible text: Exodus 20:12

Memory verse: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you" Exodus 20:12

Bible Story: 1 Samuel 15:23

Objectives:

- To recognize the importance of obedience.
- To learn the importance of obedience to God.
- To understand that obedience to what God and our parents direct us to do gives us protection.

Activities

Starting activity:

- Welcome each child.
- As they enter the classroom, open a large umbrella in the center of the classroom.
- Ask them to sit around the umbrella.
- There will be a bottle of water.

- Start spraying them with water so that the umbrella protects them.
- The winner is the one who is not wet at the end of the game (therefore he must remain under the umbrella).
- They are asked to relate the protection of the umbrella to the instructions of our parents and the word of God.

Developmental activities:

- It is important that as the teacher relates the lesson, he is supported with illustrations to explain what is happening in the story to hold the children's attention.
- Read the Bible story from 1 Samuel 15:23
- The children are guided to participate by means of leading questions.

You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness. (Deut. 4:11).

- Why do you think it is important to obey?
- Why do you think God rejected Saul as King?
- What things does God ask us to obey?
- What do parents ask you to obey at home?
- What happens if we disobey God's Word?
- What happens if we disobey our parents?

They are instructed to write on cardboards previously cut in the shape of a raindrop, the ideas provided in response to the questions.

The teacher will glue these ideas to the edge of the umbrella. This way it will be of greater understanding that the analogy that the umbrella represents the Word of God and the instruction of our parents and that they protect us from the things that can happen to us if we disobey.

Role-playing Activity:

Game: Obey - Disobey.

The spiritual objective of the game is to understand the importance of obeying the Word of God.

It is carried out in an open space where two signs will be placed, each one with a word: "Obey" and "disobey". These should be placed separately to allow the children to run or move in the space.

The teacher will ask them to stand in a neutral spot away from the signs.

The teacher will have prepared a list of responsibilities that the children are asked to do at home as well as biblical commandments.

Next, the teacher gives the children the game instructions, "Each time they hear a phrase they should run or move to the space where there is a sign that best answers the question, Obey or disobey?"

Some of the phrases on the list might be:

- Obey and take care of your mother.

“You gathered. You stood in the shadow of the mountain. The mountain was ablaze with fire, blazing high into the very heart of Heaven. You stood in deep darkness and thick clouds. God spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but you saw nothing—no form, only a voice. He announced his covenant, the Ten Words, by which he commanded you to live. Then he wrote them down on two slabs of stone.” (Deuteronomy 4:11, Message Bible).

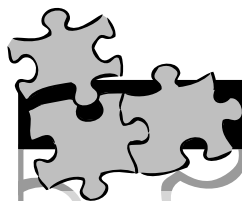
- Yell at your father
- Love God
- Do not help my friends
- Lie
- Read the Word of God
- Pray
- My friends invite me to smoke
- Learning a Bible verse.

Closing activity:

- They are taught the Bible verse and asked to repeat it in their own words.
- They are given a chart with 10 lines where they should write down during the week the actions they took to obey and care for their father and mother.
- This list should be brought to the next class to share.

Resources:

- Bible
- Umbrella
- Raindrops made from cardboard
- Water bottle or spray bottle
- Signs for closing activity
- Graphite pencils
- Chart sheet for the week's actions



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

At this stage of transition from dependence to independence, preadolescent children need to be guided to take firm steps in their faith to follow Jesus on the path of discipleship. Classes for pre-teens should be interesting and with varied activities, aiming to build healthy habits for their spiritual formation and Christian life.

How to teach pre-teens (from 10 to 12 years old)

Physically	How to teach them
They have a lot of energy and sometimes get into mischief in class.	Allow them to participate in the program.
Their physical growth is slow. They are strong.	Have them use their skills.
Their small muscles are more developed.	Give them more delicate manual tasks.
They want lots of activity.	Have a well-prepared program with lots of variety.
The physical changes of sexual development in girls, (young woman) are starting	Help them understand the physical changes, especially if their parents do not talk about it, preferably in separate gender groups, so that children can ask questions and engage in dialogue freely and confidently.
Mentally	How to teach them
They get bored if they are taught things they already know and if the program does not vary. Their attention span is 10 to 15 minutes.	Encourage their participation in the program through the use of visual aids, role plays, quizzes and other activities.
Their reasoning is developing, but they still need to understand the figurative and symbolic language of the Bible.	Explain symbols and figurative terms in the Bible. Use pictures and objects to clarify concepts that are difficult to understand.
They like to learn things by heart because they do it easily.	Carefully choose verses that can help them in their problems and in their spiritual life.
They want to answer questions without the teacher's help.	Let them find the answers for themselves in the Bible. Ask for their opinion.
They are already starting to form habits for life.	Cultivate good habits, such as punctuality. Teach them the joy of doing good.
Socially	How to teach them
They want to belong to a group of children their own age.	Try to win the leaders of these groups so that they can win their followers. Create projects for the whole group. Help them discover in Jesus, their Best Friend, an example of friendship.
They feel antagonism towards the opposite sex.	It would be good to have separate classes for boys and girls, each group with a teacher of the same gender.
They have a keen interest in games and group spirit. They like competition and want to stand out.	Teach them competitive games. Have contests in a spirit of kindness. Encourage them to do their best in memorization, Bible reading, attendance and punctuality
They respect their superiors. They want them to be honest and fair. They respond to authority.	Challenge them to trust in the Lord and emphasize the authority of the Son of God and the Bible. Control the class and make fair and impartial decisions.
Spiritually	How to teach them
They recognize that they are sinners who need help to do good. They discover that Jesus is the Savior and the way to God.	Present Jesus as the Savior from sin.
They have a simple faith.	They believe in salvation in a simple way, without great knowledge.
They are hungry for God.	Satisfy their thirst for Christ and His work in them. Encourage them to read the Bible and pray alone.
They have a sense of justice, loyalty and honor.	Teach them the attributes of God
They understand the relationship of events.	Help them study the facts of the Bible
They are worshipers.	You can use the worship service to encourage them.

Activities

Time



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare a lesson for 10–12 year olds, taking into account what you have learned. The general theme for the lesson will be: *Created for good works*. The text to memorize: *Ephesians 2:10*. Choose a Bible story related to this teaching. For example, *John 6:1-13*.

2. In groups of 3-4, brainstorm the following: How would you present the plan of salvation to 10–12 year olds?

3. In the same groups, think about the classroom and all that has been learned. Are the teaching materials sufficient and adequate for this age group or should the classroom be better equipped? Make a list of everything that is needed and design a plan to raise funds to cover this need.

4. If you are already a teacher of this class, what would you like to implement from what you learned? What changes would you like to make from now on?

Bibliography

Books:

Medina, S y Gómez, J. (2005). *La dimensión espiritual en los niños: su desarrollo y fortalecimiento. (The spiritual dimension in children: its development and strengthening)* Departamento de pediatría y puericultura. Facultad de Medicina. Universidad de Antioquía.

Papalia, D. E., Feldman, R. D., Martorell, G., Berber Morán, E., & Vázquez Herrera, M. (2012). *Desarrollo humano (Human development)* (12a ed.) McGraw Gill.

Trent, J., Osborne, R., Bruner, K. (2003). *Guía para el crecimiento espiritual de sus hijos. Ayude a sus hijos a desarrollar una fe personal. (Guide to your children's spiritual growth. Help your children develop a personal faith.)* Enfoque a la familia. Primera Edición. EE.UU, Texas.

Valverde, O., Solano, A., Alfaro, J. y Vega, M. (2001). *Adolescencia protección y riesgo en Costa Rica multiples aristas, una tarea de todos y todas. (Adolescence, protection and risk in Costa Rica, multiple edges, a task for all.)* CCSS. Costa Rica, San José. (1 ed).

Ibarbaltz J., Gustafson K. (2008). *Potencie la Educación Cristiana en su iglesia. (Empower Christian Education in your church.)* Buenos Aires: Alianza.

Web Sites:

Hunter, A. (s/f.). *Pesadillas en los niños: ¿Por qué tienen sueños desagradables? (Nightmares in children: Why do they have unpleasant dreams?)* <https://www.serpadres.es/1-2-anos/salud-enfermedades/fotos/pesadillas-en-ninos-por-que-tienen-suenos-desagradables>

Obrerofiel.com. *Cómo preparo una Lesson bíblica con excelencia (How I prepare a Bible lesson with excellence).* <https://obrerofiel.com/product/como-preparo-la-leccion-biblica-con-excelencia/>,

Final Evaluation

Time



COURSE: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Student's name: _____

Church or center where he/she studies: _____

District: _____

Course Teacher: _____

Date of this evaluation: _____

1. *Name something new you learned about how children learn.*

2. *List three things that teachers of children in your church need to improve in the way they teach.*

3. *List three things that need to be changed/fixed in the children's classrooms at your local church.*

4. *What did you learn in the ministerial practice of the course?*

5. *In your opinion, how could this course be improved?*

About this book

Christian Education for Children prepares teachers by instructing them in the characteristics of children at different stages of growth, in the suitability of the classroom, and in the design of appropriate lessons for each stage of development. It also includes instructions on how to involve parents in the spiritual formation of their children.



The coordinator

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez has served for over 40 years as a preacher, lecturer, educator, missionary, administrator and editor of books for various church ministries. She has written books in the area of discipleship, church development, holiness living and Christian education. Since 1995, she has lived in San Jose, Costa Rica, where she serves with her husband at the Nazarene Seminary of the Americas. They have two children and four grandchildren. Contributors to this book were Costa Ricans Yamileth Mora Gamboa and Irene Mena Arias, both teachers with extensive experience in the Christian education of children.

School of Leadership

The School of Leadership program brings a fresh and modern approach to ministerial training. It includes a series of five essential courses that will serve as a foundation for fruitful ministry in the modern church. In addition, the program contains six series of Ministry Specialties, each consisting of six courses oriented to a specific area of ministry. Each book in the program is designed to speak to both new and experienced ministers, introducing ideas, tools, and resources to elevate the quality of their ministry in practical and relevant ways for today's church.

Essential Courses

- Worship as a Lifestyle
- The Bible and its Message
- Discovering my Vocation in Christ
- The DNA of the Nazarenes
- Principles for Christian Life

Ministry Specialties

- Christian Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Ministerial Leadership
- Youth Ministry
- Compassionate Ministries
- Intercultural Missions

To download digital copies, visit: mesonaz.org/en/package/school-of-leadership

