

# Teaching Bible

## Reasons Why Teaching Bible Is Important

- As an educator, you have the creative position of a sculptor who shapes people who learn, ask questions, and grow skills in studying and talking about the most important text of their lives: the Bible.
- Faithful Bible reading and teaching is not only for adults with the spiritual gift of teaching. It is for everyone. You can help to normalize the process of reading, studying, and teaching the Bible so that it becomes part of the fabric of your students' lives.
- The Word of God is living, powerful, and precious. Because of this, it is of inestimable value to have God's Word become deeply ingrained in the hearts and minds of our children from a very young age. This happens through things like regular Bible class and required Bible memorization.
- When done well, teaching Bible class creates world-changers. It teaches students to be relational with God, humble doers, and equipped for kingdom service.

## General Advice and Teaching Tips

- Try to find the balance between academic rigor in Bible class (this is important; it should be treated with equal importance as other subjects) and keeping the curriculum manageable (frustration kills joy).
- Model the skills of reading, studying, and teaching the Bible in your classroom. Then give your students opportunities to practice and improve in the skills themselves.
- A big part of learning to tell Bible stories well is practicing saying it out loud to yourself first. You want to be able to engage with the students while telling the story, not be tied to reading from a book.
- Use maps. Point to them and show the students where things happened. You can also get little maps and have students colour them as you are studying about that particular area.
- Have students read the Scripture passages aloud, one verse per person. Have them all open their Bibles and follow along.
- Make things practical to your students' lives whenever possible.
- Show pictures or bring in items for every noun that is unusual. For example: leeks, pomegranates, shofar, ephod, showbread, oil lamps, etc.
- One helpful format for teaching a Bible passage is Hook-Book-Look-Took:
  - Hook: Awaken hunger and interest with an evocative question, interesting prop, or startling statement
  - Book: Read Biblical text together
  - Look: Explore the meaning of the verses
  - Took: Apply the passage to students' own lives

## Elementary

- Study and discussion skills to model and cultivate:
  - Use picture posters, a flannelgraph, or an illustrated book. Read several verses or a paragraph while showing the corresponding picture.
  - Explain/narrate/interpret.
  - Read the next section of verses while holding up its illustration.
  - Display pictures as you go. When you finish the story, you'll have a series (5-6) of pictures on the board. Or you can draw simple figures on the board to show characters, action, and story progression.
  - Use this lineup of pictures to review key vocabulary and plot points. Ask them questions. Themes and important points will come out of this exchange of questions and observations.
  - Have students summarize the story to a conversation partner. They can refer to the pictures and your review as they do.

### **Junior High and High School**

- As students get older and their minds develop, it is appropriate to move from factual, knowledge-based Bible teaching to deeper, heart-level issues.
- Focus on modelling and cultivating presentation and discussion skills.
  - Assign students to share devotions or lead discussions. If you have too many students for each to take a turn to speak to the whole group, divide them into smaller groups and appoint several presenters to share simultaneously.
  - Encourage students to study, listen, and interact with Scripture with others in community (i.e. their classmates).
  - Complete an evaluation sheet for a student's presentation and/or have them reflect on their own presentation and other students' presentations. Reflecting, evaluating, and giving/receiving feedback is crucial because it offers perspective and interaction that the individual would have missed if reflecting only by him/herself.
- Requiring students to prepare before a discussion can greatly aid student involvement. For example, the night before a discussion of Acts 1-2, you could give students a homework assignment of writing a short paragraph in response to the question, "What is the importance of the ascension?" This gives students time to think about the topic beforehand, which especially helps those who need longer to think about a topic before they are comfortable contributing their thoughts. Also, if students are not engaged, you can call on them, knowing they have something to answer.
- Have students take a moment to reflect following a discussion. This may be as simple as handing out notecards and having them write down what they learned today.

### **Bible Memory**

- Especially for younger students, be sure to devote some time to discussing the meaning of the passage and explaining difficult words.

- Intentionally build systems into place that prevent students from a “cram it and forget it” mindset. Group practice each day is an easy first step in accomplishing this.
- Tips for helping students memorize passages:
  - Type out the passage including clipart, various colors, and different fonts to help make it more visual.
  - Split passages into sections of two to four verses and learn a section at a time.
  - Make up motions for the verses.
  - Model using good expression and voice inflection.
  - Allow students to study with a partner.
  - Give students opportunities to practice their verses throughout the day, perhaps while waiting in line or as a transition between classes.
  - Give older students a sheet that has only the first letter of each word of the passage. For example, John 3:16 would be written “F G s l t w, t h g h o b s, t w b i h s n p, b h e l.” This forces the brain to recall and is a very effective memorization tool.
- Consider the pros and cons of various ways of having students present the passage. Consider giving students a few options, as different individuals will prefer different methods.
  - Have students recite it individually during class time such as handwriting, silent reading, or study hall.
  - Have students recite it individually before or after school or during recess.
  - Allow students to write the passage by hand. A variation of this would be giving the students a sheet that has a blank for each word of the passage.
  - Allow young students to recite the passage in small groups.

## Recommended Resources

- Planning tips and ideas for elementary devotions:
  - [Fruitful Dreaming: Ideas for Planning Devotions \(Part I\) - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Fruitful Dreaming: Ideas for Devotions \(Part II\) - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Ideas: Elementary Devotions - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [The Creation—A Picture for Little Eyes - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Devotions Lessons - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Altar Stone Lessons - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Planning tips and ideas for junior high and high school devotions:
  - [Bible Study Skills - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Planning School Devotions for the Year - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Bible Survey Syllabus for the Sermon on the Mount. - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Opening Questionnaire for Bible Study Methods Course - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Inductive Bible Study - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Topical Bible Study Worksheet - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Practical video examples of presenting Bible stories in various ways: [Show Them, Tell Them: Techniques to Communicate the Stories of the Bible - The Dock for Learning](#)

- Swedish Bible study method: [The Swedish Method: One Way to Study the Bible with Your Students - The Dock for Learning](#)
- List of Jewish holidays and ideas of how you could celebrate them with your students: [Jump-start Your Bible Class with These Five Tips - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Examples of whole-school Bible Memory schedules:
  - [Bible Memory Scope & Sequence \(K-12\) - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Bible Memory Schedule - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Bible Memory Scope and Sequence - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [Bible Memorization Schedule - The Dock for Learning](#)
  - [SMS Bible Memory Scope and Sequence - The Dock for Learning](#)
- A high school teacher's method for having students grade each other's Bible memory: [Bible Memory Scoring - The Dock for Learning](#)

## Sources

- Study to Show by Anita Yoder: [Study to Show - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Jump-start Your Bible Class with These Five Tips by Deana Swanson: [Jump-start Your Bible Class with These Five Tips - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Bible Memory Tools by Rosalie Beiler: [Bible Memory Tools - The Dock for Learning](#)
- I Know My Verses! By Arlene Birt: [I Know My Verses! - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Prepare, Summarize, Reflect; Encouraging Discussion in Bible Class and Beyond by Shawn Stoner: [Prepare, Summarize, Reflect; Encouraging Discussion in Bible Class and Beyond - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Teaching the Bible Effectively and Joyfully by Patrick Heatwole: [Teaching the Bible Effectively and Joyfully - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Teaching Secondary Bible by Steven Brubaker: [Teaching Secondary Bible - The Dock for Learning](#)