

BIBLICAL TRUTHS FOR TODDLERS

How can we teach children under two years old the truths of the Bible? Should we just wait until they are older and can understand more? Although the learning capacities of very young children are limited, their spirits can be very much alive. The responsibility of a nursery caregiver for toddlers is to appeal and nurture that spirit and help expand the horizons of their understanding. We can begin to lay foundational truth from the Word of God by speaking simple truth statements intentionally, frequently and in conjunction with something to which the child can relate and understand. Children need to see that Biblical truth is part of the fabric of everyday life. It is not a book unto itself, but an essential part of life; in fact, it is the pivotal source of truth for everyone on this earth as it is the printed communication from God to man.

Young children love repetition; one of the most common tools employed in teaching this age is repetition. When we begin teaching words to babies we say the word many times in varying contexts so the child will not only be able to say the word but also have an understanding of what it means. So it is with the truths for toddlers. We can sprinkle them through many conversations with the children during the session for maximum impression and understanding. The first time you say to a child, “God is good”, he may have a very limited idea of what you mean. But as the phrase is repeated often in relation to situations in his experience, he will absorb the meaning and trust that “God is good”.

Understanding Biblical truth is ultimately God’s doing. While we carry out our responsibility to teach those truths there will be times when we reach beyond the child’s understanding. That is a natural part of learning. We will try to target the child’s learning level as often as possible, but they need to hear concepts new to them in order to grow in understanding and knowledge. The spiritual work comes as the Spirit of God quickens what they understand to guide behavior and to be grasped through His faith. So it is important that you pray consistently for your little students that God would accomplish His work through the Word in them.

Biblical Truths for Toddlers

God is good.

God is big.

God is strong.

Jesus loves you.

We love Jesus.

Thank you Jesus.

God made everything. (You may wish to say, “God made trees, or birds, or your nose, etc.”)

God is with us.

God knows everything.

Jesus is my friend.

Jesus loves everyone. (You may wish to say, “Jesus loves babies, children, boys, girls”)

We need God.

PRAY

Colossians 4:2 “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

You have joined a huge ministry staff in training up children in the way they should go so that when they are old they will not depart from their faith in Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual duty and work. There are eternal consequences to this work, and it cannot be accomplished without God's making it happen. We can wipe noses and play with children...we cannot make them feel the presence of God around them, we can't plant seeds of truth in their hearts, and we cannot give them spiritual understanding. We cannot give them faith nor can we create a love for God in their hearts. It is God's desire and job to do these things.

God honors prayer. It is His plan...He thought it up, He hears the prayer, and He alone has the power to make these things become fact, become reality.

Our part is to be obedient and pray.

So when should you pray? What should you ask Him for?

WHEN? WHAT?

Before...During the week when you think of the children, pray for them by name.

Before you leave home on the day of service in the nursery, pray that God will forgive your sins (name them), that He will fill you with His Spirit, that He will help you know how to relate to each child, that He will give you chances to teach the children the truths of the week.

During...At the beginning of your session, ask God to show you the children that need your special attention or help.

During the lesson, pray for the teacher to be filled with God's Spirit, that the teacher will do a good job, and the children will be given the ability to understand and grow in the knowledge of Christ.

During play time, ask God to help you honor Him in how you relate to the children, to give you chances to talk to them about God, to keep the children safe.

After...Praise Him for each answer to prayer that He has given you during the session.

Ask Him to continue to use the lessons at church all week so the children will keep on growing in Christ.

TWO WAYS TO TEACH CHILDREN

Colossians 3:16a “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,”

Whether you meant to be or not, when you work in any nursery you will be a teacher. “But I thought you said that we weren’t allowed to teach the story?” you object. That’s right! But there are two ways to teach children; one is by intentionally teaching them and the other happens all the time you are with the children, and that is teaching by modeling.

MODELING:

I’m sure you’ve heard the old saying, “More is caught than taught.” The children may learn more from what they see you doing than by what they hear you or the teacher saying. This means that you are a teacher even before you begin to talk to a child, teaching by your appearance, your smile, how you talk to others, how you help or don’t help in a room, the kind of words you choose to use, your tone of voice, everything!

It is important to remember that little children learn by observing. They see everything around them and accept it as a way to behave and to talk. They have little or no discernment before age 3 as to whether or not something is acceptable to others or to God. Your behavior and speech before them is much more important than it would be if you were working in first or second grade. By this time the children are developing a conscience and learning that some things can be said, others not. Some things can be done, others forbidden. But for toddlers, they absorb it all, and it is up to the caregiver to be very careful to behave in ways that he/she would be glad to see the little one copy.

INTENTIONAL TEACHING:

In Nurseries 3, B, Beginners and C there will be a Bible story taught by a teacher. Your job as a youth caregiver during that time is to sit on the rug with the children and listen to the story with them. Your careful attention models how they should be listening. But it is also help for you to hold a wiggly child on your lap (if he is willing) or to sit near someone who is easily distracted and gently touch him and point to the teacher to remind him to listen. Out loud instructions interrupt the lesson and so are not helpful. If a child does not respond to you it is best to leave his direction to the adult caregivers. There are two ways you can teach on purpose in the nursery even if you cannot yet teach the story.

One is to read or say the Biblical Truth for Toddlers for the month. You will see all 12 of them posted on the wall, or, at the North site, in a pocket chart in the room. A star or another pointer will mark the one for the current month. You can show it to the child and read it, or you can just say it out loud to him.

Then you will want to teach in the second way, and that is to connect the truth with what the child already knows or understands. That may sound a little difficult, but it really is easy. Here’s an example:

You’ve just read, “God Made Everything” to Joey from one of the banners on the wall, which list the Biblical Truths. Now you ask him, “What did God make, Joey?” He may

say back to you, “Everything!” Or he may answer, “The world”, or “Me”. Whatever he says, you can get him to think about more things that God made by saying, “Who made your hair? Who made your toes?” etc.

The challenge is not only to teach from the printed truths but from experiences all through the session. Now you are working a puzzle with Joey. It is a picture of creation. You can ask, “Joey, did you know God is everywhere?” Then take his finger (or use your own if he is reluctant) and point first to the mountain, then to the sea, then to the sky, etc. and ask each time, “Is God there? Yes! Is God there? Yes!”

A little practice will make something that may seem awkward at first become natural and easy for you, and you will become an official teacher of God’s Word on a one-to-one basis.

Foundation Verses

- January: And do not forget to do good and to share with others.
 Hebrews 13:16a
- February: Do everything without complaining or arguing.
 Philippians 2:14
- March: When I am afraid, I will trust in you.
 Psalm 56:3
- April: A friend loves at all times.
 Proverbs 17:17
- May: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
 Ephesians 6:1
- June: Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.
 Ephesians 6:10
- July: I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.
 Philippians 4:13
- August: This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be
glad in it.
 Psalm 118:24
- September: All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
 Romans 3:23
- October: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
 Genesis 1:1
- November: My son, if sinners entice you, do not give into them.
 Proverbs 1:10
- December: Every good and perfect gift is from above.
 James 1:17

HOW TO TEACH FIGHTER VERSES TO TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS

It is recommended that memory work be done at a separate time from the lesson. It can be done casually merely by periodically repeating the verse during freeplay. Or, if the children are brought together at an additional time during the hour, the memory verse can be repeated four or five times with the children. (For example, when the children are sitting at the table waiting for snacks, take the opportunity to teach the fighter verse.)

Start by teaching a phrase and then expanding the verse as the children learn its parts. **One verse is focused on each month.**

The best way to help children memorize verses is repetition. First, pronounce the reference and have the group repeat it. Then say the verse, in several bit size chunks, the children repeat each part. Then say the reference again. Go over the verse several more times, lengthening the parts said each time.

Use the Fighter Verse Flash Cards! The children will quickly associate the shape and color with the verse they are learning. These are particularly helpful for review.

I deas for Bible Memory

Singing: Put the fighter verse to a traditional tune.

Tape Recording: make a tape recording of your class saying their verses.
They will love hearing themselves on the recorder!

Illustrations: Have each child illustrate the verse or a part of it and display their drawings.

PRAYING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Monthly Prayer Themes

January:

Pray that they will know Christ as Savior early in life and treasure their inheritance as Sons of God; that they will not accept Satan's design against them but walk in light as heirs of the kingdom.

February:

Pray that they will have a hatred for sin and a love for godliness.

March:

Pray that they will appreciate discipline and instructions, be quick to repent; that they will be caught when guilty.

April:

Pray that they will be protected from the evil one in each area of their lives: spiritual, emotional, and physical. Pray that they will stand firm in persecution. Pray that they will be patient in affliction and look to God, Trusting in His faithfulness when they have problems.

May:

Pray that they will have a responsible and loving attitude in their relationships with others. Pray that they will walk in humility and look to the needs of others.

June:

Pray that they will respect God's lordship over them, and those he has placed in authority over them.

July:

Pray that they will choose godly influences; that they will desire the right kind of friends and be protected from the wrong ones; that they will be "hedged in" so they cannot find their way to wrong people or places and that the wrong people cannot find their way to them; that they will be kept from the wrong mate and saved for the right one.

August:

Pray that they would desire inner beauty and godly character, and that they would grow more Christ-like daily; that they, as well as those they marry, will be kept pure both before and after marriage.

September:

Pray that they will learn to totally submit to God and actively resist Satan in all circumstances.

October:

Pray that they will be single-hearted, willing to be sold out to Jesus Christ and joyfully invested in the cause of the kingdom.

November:

Pray that they would grow in faith, obedience and in love for God; that they would "Love not the world, nor the things of the world."

December:

Pray that they would treasure God's Word and stand up for truth; that they would be free from deception and the lies of the evil one; and have a great understanding of the Word.

Program Components

Nursery 1	Nursery 2
Nursery 3	Beginners

ROUTINES FOR NURSERY SESSIONS, N1&NA

NURSERY 1: 0 – 12 months

NURSERY A: 0 – 15 months

Ratio is 2 infants/1 caregiver

<u>9:00 a.m.</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>	<u>5:30 p.m.</u>
8:40 a.m.	<u>Prayer with team members</u>	10:40 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
8:45 a.m.	<u>Check-in begins</u> Babies are prayed for, cuddled, put into swings, rocked and played with while new babies are being received.	10:45 a.m.	5:15 p.m.
9:30 a.m.	<u>Singing and Prayer</u> Caregivers are encouraged to sing together or as individuals, using a disc, tape or words posted in the room. All caregivers are asked to pray individually for each baby, either quietly or aloud. The prayer focus for each month is posted on the wall with supporting Scripture.	11:30 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
10:00 a.m.	<u>Feeding and Diaper Changing</u> Special instructions for feeding and naptimes are listed on the attendance board by the baby's name. Each child's diaper should be checked and changed unless the baby is sleeping or parents have requested that their child not be changed.	12:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
10:20 a.m.	<u>Pick-up/Check-in Transition Time</u>	12.20 p.m.	6:50 p.m.

ROUTINES FOR NURSERY SESSIONS, N2

NURSERY 2: 13-17 months
Ratio is 3 children/1 caregiver

<u>9:00 a.m.</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>	<u>5:30 p.m.</u>
8:40 a.m.	<u>Prayer with team members</u> Highlight truth statement for the morning.	10:40 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
8:45 a.m.	<u>Check-in begins</u> Quiet, supervised play; intentional interaction is expected and encouraged; Children are engaged in book reading, blocks, rocking, and large and small muscle play.	10:45 a.m.	5:15 p.m.
9:30 a.m.	<u>Worship Time</u> Lesson Time (on a sheet or blanket): Christ exalting singing and /or finger plays. Emphasize the truth statement for the day. All caregivers should pray for each child individually, either quietly or aloud.	11:30 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
9:45 a.m.	<u>Snack Time</u> Pray together for the snack (graham crackers and water in sippy cups). Repeat and review the Truth Statements.	11:45 a.m.	6:15 p.m.
10:00 a.m.	<u>Diapers Changed</u> Team leader designates two women to change diapers, and one caregiver to bring the children to be changed to the ones diapering. Children not being changed are involved in quiet, supervised free play. Each child's diaper should be checked and changed during the hour unless specifically asked by parents not to do so.	12:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
10:20 a.m.	<u>Pick up/Check-in Transition Time</u>	12:20 p.m.	6:50 p.m.

ROUTINES FOR NURSERY SESSIONS, BEGINNERS AND NURSERY C

BEGINNERS: 2 & 3 years old
Nursery C: 2 & 3 years old
Ratio is 4 children/1 caregiver

<u>9:00 a.m.</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>	<u>5:30 p.m.</u>
8:40 a.m.	<u>Pray with team members.</u> Highlight today's lesson theme.	10:40 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
8:45 a.m.	<u>Check-in begins.</u> Quiet, supervised play; intentional interaction is expected and encouraged; engage children in book reading, blocks, puzzles. play-doh, coloring and bubbles.	10:45 a.m.	5:15 p.m.
9:30 a.m.	<u>Christ Exalting Bible Lesson</u> Caregivers sit with the children to encourage listening and participa- tion. Each caregiver should pray quietly for every child throughout the morning.	11:30 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
9:40 a.m.	<u>Worship Time</u> Worship Leader teaches and leads children in singing Christ exalting music and songs.	11:40 a.m.	6:10 p.m.
9:55 a.m.	<u>Snack Time</u> Children are led to tables on the "emergency evacuation" ropes. Pray together for the snack (graham crackers and water in sippy cups). Repeat and review the lesson truths.	11:55 a.m.	6:25 p.m.
10:00 a.m.	<u>Diapers Changed</u> Team leader designates two women To change diapers, and one caregiver To bring the children to be changed to the ones diapering. Children not being changed are involved in quiet, supervised free play. Each child's diaper should be checked and changed during the hour unless asked by parents not to do so.	12:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
10:20 a.m.	<u>Pick up/Check-in Transition Time</u>	12:20 p.m.	6:50 p.m.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR THE TRANSITION TIME BETWEEN THE WORSHIP SERVICE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. Talk about the service. Go over your child's notes or have him explain his drawings to you.
2. Visit the church library.
3. Review the Fighter Verses or the Foundation Verses. You may even want to have a contest where you test each other.
4. Bring a book of short stories (such as Hero Tales or Missionary Stories with the Millers) and read a selection.
5. Take your child to the rest room. This is especially important to do with younger children so they will not miss out on any class time. It is also a big help to the Sunday School staff (especially in classrooms of younger children which do not have rest room facilities) as someone must leave the classroom to accompany your child to the rest room.
6. Visit the missionary display and talk about the missionaries and their ministries with your child. You may also want to pray for a missionary family.
7. Have a time of prayer for your child's Sunday School experience and for the worship service that will be starting. Pray for the church staff.
8. If the weather is nice, walk around the outside of the building. You may want to turn this time into a prayer walk. You could also walk through the church building, stopping at strategic points to pray (i.e. pray outside Sunday School classrooms for the children and children's ministry workers; pray outside the office for the ministry assistants; pray outside the nurseries for the babies there).
9. Bring the picture directory and see how many people you can find. Learn the names of those you do not know.
10. Play Bible "Who Am I". Give clues about a Bible character and have your children guess the Bible character.
11. Have a sword drill.
12. Memorize the order of the books of the Bible.
13. Bring a Bible knowledge book with you and see how many questions your children can answer. Have them look up answers they don't know.
14. Using a postcard from the rack, write notes of encouragement to others. Children who do not write yet, can dictate a message or draw a picture. You may want to include a Fighter Verse or another passage of scripture.
15. Find someone your family can encourage. Share scripture with them and pray for them.

ASK GOD HOW YOU CAN MAKE THIS TIME A VALUABLE PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SPIRITUAL TRAINING, OR A TIME OF FAMILY BONDING OR MINISTRY TO OTHERS. USE YOUR OWN CREATIVITY AND SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH OTHERS!

GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU PARENT YOUR CHILD
AND TEACH HIM THE WAYS OF GOD.