



LESSON 18

Magnify Your Writing Skills

CREATIVE THOUGHT PROCESS EXERCISE: (Use the following example to help you get started.)

Begin with the basic lesson assignment: (We are writing for the Preschool age group.)

- Lesson Title: Ezra Reads the Law
- Key Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-3
- Memory Verse: Nehemiah 8:3
- Lesson Aim: To teach our students the importance of listening to/hearing God's Word
- Introduction
- Bible Story
- Conclusion
- Reinforce the Lesson (Activity/Review Questions)
- Extended Session - Getting Acquainted with the Bible

THE MEMORY VERSE

STEP 1:

- Take time to read the Scripture Text carefully.
- Consider the age group you are working with for this lesson.
- Read the verses before and after the text to find a memory verse that will help your students to catch the purpose of the lesson.
- If there is no verse before and after the text (or inside the text) that fits your age group, or that will make the lesson aim clear, then look for a verse in another place in the Bible.
- Nehemiah 8:3 is a good memory verse for preschoolers. They would not be able to learn the whole verse. The last portion (the verse is divided into three parts) fits the lesson aim and can be easily understood by young students.

"And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law" (Nehemiah 8:3).

Psalms 119:11 is also a fitting memory verse for this lesson. (*"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*) However, young children might have a hard time understanding how they can hide God's word in their "heart."

STEP 2:

Since we are dealing with younger students, the method used to teach the memory verse should be as active as possible. (Lesson 16 gives many possibilities, but "Follow the Scripture Path" will be used here as an example.)

- Count the number of words in the verse.
- Make a path with stones, drawn with chalk on the cement, or written in the dirt with a stick, using each individual word as one step/stone.
- Make sure the number of steps/stones matches the number of words in the verse.
- Hold your Bible up high to be sure the students understand where you are reading.
- Read the verse clearly and slowly.
- Repeat the verse several times, asking students to repeat after you.
- Read the verse one word at a time, stepping on a different stone/step after each word.

- Call for as many students as you have steps/stones, and place a different student on each one.
- Repeat the Bible verse, touching each student (on each step/stone) as you go. Have them say the word of the step/stone on which they are standing.
- Call out another student to follow the "path" with you, as you read the verse from the Bible.

BUILDING THE INTRODUCTION

Step 1:

- Think about the students' age level.
- Read the verses of the Scripture Text, looking for something that catches your attention.
- Search for a picture/action word/phrase that means something to your students. This word might:
 - Paint a picture in your mind (a tree bearing fruit).
 - Think of an action that your students might do (run a race, climb a hill).
- Read the verses carefully.
- Discuss any word/phrase that caught your attention.

Step 2:

- Place the word/phrase that you have chosen from the Scripture Text into your "memory bank" and think about it for awhile.
 - What does this word mean to the students (age group) I am writing for?
 - What activity could the students do that would express what this word says?
 - Below is an example of how the introduction could be taught:
- "Hear with understanding" was the phrase (in our text) that stood out.
 - If students do not hear with understanding, our efforts to teach the Word of God are in vain. As writers, our lessons must first be understood by the teachers/instructors.
 - Then they must be able to share the lesson in such a way that the students "hear with understanding" also. What type of activity could we use to make this idea clear?
 - Below is a suggestion of how this could be done:
 - 1) The teacher/instructor should draw an ear on the board/paper/ground. (Ask the students to tell you what you have drawn.)
 - 2) Now draw another ear, forgetting about the head that usually comes in between.
 - 3) Now what do your students see? (Your two ears drawn together form a heart.)
 - 4) When we hear with understanding, our heart is involved. This means that we not only hear the words, but we know what they mean to us.

BUILDING THE LESSON BODY

STEP 1:

- Read the Scripture Text again carefully.
- This time, think of ways that the Bible story can be told, using student participation. (This will depend on the age of the students involved.)

STEP 2:

Nehemiah 8:1-3 is a dramatic story of how an entire nation repented and listened to the Word of God. Ezra, the scribe, read the book, and the people STOOD and listened to every word (Nehemiah 8:3, 18). This passage speaks of how important it was for the people to understand what was being read. The Levites helped Ezra to be sure that they made sense of the reading (Nehemiah 8:8). The people had been living in Babylon for many years, and some did not know Hebrew. So the Levites (who understood both languages) were interpreting for them. When they understood, they wept in repentance

(Nehemiah 8:9). This story shows us how important it is for us to know and obey God's law.

- Since we are dealing with the youngest age group, activity is important. Lesson 14 gives numerous examples of action methods. The role-play would be effective with this particular Bible story.
- Choose from the volunteers a student to be Ezra.
- Now choose several students to be the Levites (those who helped the people understand what Ezra was reading).
- The rest of the class would be the people. Choose students to act like they are old, others to act like young adults, and others to act like children.
- The teacher tells the Bible story, pausing to give instructions to the students to be sure they are acting out what is happening.
- Students may add dialogue to the story if they want (as long as it doesn't change the Bible story/doctrine in any way).

For example:

- Ezra might say, "Hear ye the Word of the Lord."
- The Levites might repeat what he says to be sure that everyone hears clearly.
- The congregation might shout, "Amen"!

BUILDING THE CLOSING

STEP 1:

- Never finish the Bible story, and just stop talking. There should ALWAYS be a definite closure to the lesson.
- Plan in advance what you would like for the students to do/know as a result of the lesson.
- Make sure that the closing also reinforces the Lesson Aim.
- If possible, bring the purpose of the lesson into the students' daily lives to help them better understand what you have taught.

STEP 2:

There are many ways to close a Sunday school lesson (as given in Lesson 11). Below is an example you might use:

- Choose volunteers from the class to come forward to draw the road sign (on the board, in the dirt, or on a piece of paper).
- Explain every road sign/warning to the class, so they will know what they should do (or not do) when they see this sign.
- Place these signs in different locations in the class area.
- Have the students show what they would do if they came to these signs.
- Have the students act like they would if the road sign/warning was not there, or they did not know what it meant.
- Discuss how the placing of important road signs is similar to reading and understanding God's Word. How does it give direction to our lives?
- Allow time for an "echo" prayer.
- Give students the chance to pray, promising that they will pay attention to God's Word when it is read/preached/taught.

REINFORCING THE LESSON

Step 1:

This is an important part of the lesson, since it will help support the main idea or purpose you are trying to teach. If you leave it out, it is possible that the students will have a difficult time remembering the

lesson.

- Lesson reinforcement can be done in several ways, depending on your student's ages and needs.
- Whatever way you choose, be careful not to use the same method for every lesson.
- Be sure to plan ahead so that you will not be hesitant in class.

STEP 2:

Below are some suggestions to help reinforce what you have taught:

- Review questions are a good method of reinforcement.
- Having a different group of students act out the lesson is also a great way to drive home the point. It also lets you know what the students got from your teaching. This is a good "test" for the teacher.
- Play a game, using one that your students are familiar with as the basis for asking review questions.

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE BIBLE

STEP 1:

Many times, the Sunday school lesson is completed before the pastor even begins preaching. It is important that your students are not left with the feeling that they are just being watched over like babies.

- As the leader, have a plan of action.
- Do not waste valuable time playing games either (unless they are reinforcing the lesson). Your students need to learn how to find the treasures in God's Word.
- This "extended session" is a good time to help them become more familiar with God's book, the Bible.

STEP 2:

- Who wrote the Bible?
- How was it put together?
- How is this greatest of all books divided?
- What is the overall theme/purpose of the Bible?
- What are the books of the Old Testament?
- What are the books of the New Testament?
- These things can be discovered using songs, stories, games, and other activities that will encourage repetition and learning.
- This learning experience will take many weeks and should be reinforced with activities and games throughout the lifetime of every student, no matter how old or young.

STEP 3:

There are many ways to get acquainted with the Bible. Below are some suggestions that might help:

- Make up songs to use with every major division of the Bible. Learning the books of the Bible a small portion at a time will make this task much easier.
- Sword drills are exciting and interesting ways to get acquainted with one division of the Bible at a time. (A sword drill is a game where students begin at the same time and see who can be first to locate a verse called out by the teacher.)
- Have the students look up information about the Bible in the library (encyclopedias, reference books, commentaries, etc.).
- For younger students, take each book of the Bible, and make up one word that relates to it for easy identification:
 - Genesis—the place to start
 - Exodus—to go out

- The divisions of the Bible can be treated this same way with younger students:
Make the divisions relative to things they understand.
 - Old shoes—Old Testament is about old things.
 - New shoes—New Testament is about things that are important to us NOW.
 - Law—even small children know that there are rules they have to obey.

*As with every other style of writing, these Sunday school lessons will require your best creativity.
With the help of the Lord and a determination to do a work for Him, YOU can write.*