



Spiritual Preparation for Teaching

Passing on the living Word of God to the next generation is the most important task a teacher can do. Most new teachers approach teaching the Bible with trepidation. “I don’t know much about the Bible!” “I haven’t been trained in teaching methods or in theology!” “I haven’t done this before!” “I’m not good enough!” “What if I say something wrong?”

Take heart. Some of God’s greatest heroes didn’t feel up to the task, either. When Moses heard God’s call, he said he had no credentials, he didn’t know enough, he worried about failure, he didn’t speak well, and finally in desperation, begged God to send someone else! Does this sound familiar?

The first step to overcoming such fears is by taking your Bible in hand. Read it for yourself! As you study, pray and grow spiritually, you’ll be stronger for your work. And remember, God does not give you tasks without His promise of help!

Personal Bible Study

Study the lesson. This may sound obvious, but study the lesson’s Bible story. While you may not present everything you learn to the class, studying the passage equips you to teach, answer questions and apply the lesson to your own life first! Study the passage early in the week so that you have time to reflect on what it is saying to you.

If the Teacher Guide has devotionals or study aids, use these gifts in your personal study time. God wants His Word to be known! Come to Bible study with assurance that you are free to ask God to open His Word and make it clear—it’s a prayer Jesus promised to answer! (See John 14:25–27.)

Establish a regular time and place. Try to establish a regular time and place for study. When we try to fit in study “when there’s free time,” there usually isn’t any. You may need to wake up a few minutes earlier, stay up a little later or choose not to take on one more activity.

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Even when people feel they can't fit lengthy uninterrupted study time into their schedules, it is important to make this time a priority. Use your children's nap time or school time, a lunch break or even on the train or bus going to work!

Clear the air. Begin study time with confession. Remember that through Jesus' sacrifice all sin is forgiven and all things are made new. Confess, repent, thank God for forgiveness, and then move on with confidence!

Get the point. Read through the lesson passage several times for meaning. If an overly familiar story seems dry, read a different translation. Determine the main concept: What did God tell the people involved? What is God saying to me today in this passage?

Meditate. Spend some quiet moments reflecting on the main point. Perhaps reread a verse that was especially meaningful and think of ways to apply the main point to situations in your daily life. Write your thoughts in a journal or practice being quiet so that you can hear God. You may find it helpful to keep a prayer journal.

After considering the message of the passage for your own life, look at the lesson aims to see the focus for using the lesson with children. Begin to pray that God will help you guide your learners toward that goal. Most of all, remember Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. Invite God to lead and teach you.

Get the background. The Bible was written in another time, place and society with many customs different from today's customs. The various books were written for specific purposes and persons. The Bible makes more sense when one knows how and why each book was compiled. Find information on the Internet, or invest in a Bible dictionary, commentary, maps and reference books. Look up Bible characters, place names, and unusual words or customs. It is usually not necessary or even useful to share all that background with children. Simply look for insights that help you better understand the passage.

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Keep Growing!

Take advantage of adult Bible studies that don't meet while you're teaching. Find a weeknight small group or a short-term course offered by your church. Take advantage of prayer groups and other opportunities.

Or, recruit a few teachers to come along with you to start your own Bible study group! Use the time to study together, pray for the students, other teachers, the unchurched in your community and for yourselves!