

Clearly Communicating Biblical Truths

1. **Know Your Passage:** Read the Bible passage at least 15-20 times to know it inside and out. Familiarize yourself with the plot, characters, setting and spiritual truth within the passage.
2. **Ask Yourself Questions that Need Answering:** Who is speaking? What is the main point? What is the passage communicating about God? What truth is revealed in the passage?
3. **Retell the Lesson/Story in a Kid-Friendly Way:** Practice retelling the story with simple words and short clear sentences. Malcom Gladwell explains that he writes at an 8th grade level and writes simple, short sentences so people can follow along. Simplify the story for the children. They need to understand and be able to retell the story in their own words.
4. **Ask the Kids the Question, “What Does That Mean?”:** After reading the Bible passage; ask the kids what the passage, main point, or key words mean? It is a great way to check for understanding and find where the kids are being lost in translation. Remember, your goal is to help the children understand the passage not get lost in the passage. (Long-Leg Luo and Short Leg-Sue, Poem)
5. **Activate Prior Knowledge:** Ask questions that help the children connect to the passage you are teaching. If the passage takes place on the Sea of Galilee; ask the kids if they have ever been to a lake or the ocean. If the passage addresses fear; ask the children when they have been scared. This technique helps the children mentally enter the lesson and use their imagination to connect to the lesson.
6. **Tie the Story to Modern, Popular, or Historical Information the Kids will Know:** Use modern examples and popular technology to help the kids comprehend the passage. When speaking of Kings and Queens, ask them if they know about the Queen of England? Ask the kids if they have ever read about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table?
7. **Define Key Words:** Chose one to two words from the passage to define for the children to help them comprehend the passage. Many words we teach the children are complex abstract concepts that they are not familiar with. Please unpack the words that are new or important for comprehension. Nonce words are used only once in a specific field or discipline. (Lemony Snicket/Painting Analogy) Brummagem, a word which here means fake. (**Nonce** Words, like nerd from Dr. Seuss’ book: If I Ran The Zoo)
8. **Check for Understanding:** Several times throughout the lesson, check to see if the children are understanding the lesson. Ask questions regarding who is speaking, what has happened, and what is going on. Use Choral Responses, thumbs-up, thumbs-down.
9. **Share a Story that Helps the Kids Understand:**
Proverbs 28:13

¹³He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

When I was your age kids, my cousin Melinda forced me to eat green beans. I thought I could fool her by covering the green beans with mashed potatoes. She was not fooled when I covered my green beans with potatoes. She discovered them and I was in trouble. This proverb tells us that if we cover our sins we will be found out.

10. Change Pronouns to Proper Nouns When the Text is Unclear:

John 17:1-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up **His (Jesus')** eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify **Your (The Father's) Son (Jesus)**, that **Your (The Father's) Son (Jesus)** also may glorify **You (Father God)**, ² as **You (Father God)** have given **Him (Jesus)** authority over all flesh, that **He (Jesus)** ^[a]should give eternal life to as many as **You (Father God)** have given **Him (Jesus)**. ³ And this is eternal life, that **they (all believers)** may know **You (Father God)**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom **You (Father God)** have sent. ⁴ **I (Jesus)** have glorified **You (Father God)** on the earth. **I (Jesus)** have finished the work which **You (Father God)** have given **Me (Jesus)** to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify **Me (Jesus)** together ^[b]with **Yourself (Father God)**, with the glory which **I (Jesus)** had with **You (Father God)** before the world was.

Make the text clear by identifying the characters by their proper nouns not pronouns or titles alone. This will help clear up the meaning of the passage for the children.

11. **Use Visual Aides:** Use pictures, illustrations, objects, bags, toys etc. to develop the main point of the lesson. "Realia" or real objects help the children grasp difficult and complex ideas that you share throughout the lesson. (Rat trap)
12. **Employ Bible Theater:** Have children volunteer to act out the Bible lesson or story. The children love to play, and Bible theater gives the children the freedom to express the story in actions. Bible theater gives all learning styles the ability to comprehend the lesson.
13. **Use your Voice to Bring the Lesson to Life:** Use your voice to make points. Slow down, speed up, speak with a lower tone when making a point. Use character voices.
14. **Bring Jesus into The Lesson:** Show that Jesus is the "Truer and Greater" version of the Bible character/story. Bring Jesus into the story to finish the Bible lesson. The totality of the Bible speaks of Him. (Heb. 10:7, Psalm 40:7, John 5:39-40.)

Contact: Pastor Mark Carson, mcarson@ccmodesto.com , www.ccmodesto.com