



SPARK

A Children & Teens Ministers'
Training Manual

SPARK

**A Children & Teens' Ministers
Training Manual**

**OLUSOLA SUN-BASORUN
DAMILOLA TAIWO**

© Copyright 2022 by OLIVETENDERS

No part of this work may be reproduced or distributed for any commercial use other than the purpose of training and teaching for ministry effectiveness without the express permission of the publisher/author given in writing.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from The Holy Bible; New Living Translation Version and King James Version.



DEDICATION

This manual is dedicated to hundreds and thousands of Children & Teens ministers who with little resources are still labouring to get ministry done to our Children & Teenagers.

God bless you all!

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION			<i>v</i>
HOW TO USE THE MANUAL			<i>vi</i>
ASSESSMENT			<i>vii</i>
BASIC LEVEL			
MODULE ONE	.....	THE LEADER	<i>1</i>
MODULE TWO	.....	AGE GROUP INSIGHTS	<i>13</i>
MODULE THREE	.....	PREPARING BIBLE LESSONS	<i>19</i>
MODULE FOUR	.....	PRESENTING BIBLE LESSONS	<i>25</i>
MODULE FIVE	.....	CHILDREN & TEENS CHURCH START UP	<i>46</i>
MODULE SIX	.....	ENGAGING PARENTS	<i>51</i>
MODULE SEVEN	.....	HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN	<i>57</i>
ADVANCE LEVEL			
MODULE ONE	.....	SPIRITUAL GROWTH	<i>70</i>
MODULE TWO	.....	DISCIPLESHIP	<i>79</i>
MODULE THREE	.....	SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE	<i>88</i>
MODULE FOUR	.....	USING TECHNOLOGY IN CHILDREN & TEENS MINISTRY	<i>96</i>

INTRODUCTION

Of David, the Bible said;

"He cared for them with a true heart and led them with skillful hands". Psalms 78:72

Then thereafter God Said,

"I will give you leaders after my own heart, who will guide you with knowledge and understanding" Jeremiah 3:15

Through many generations of the church, ministering to children has evolved under several names such as Sunday school, Children's church, future church, etc. No matter what we call it, ministry to children is supposed to be well and alive in our Churches. We partner with families as we love their children, teach them and pray for them.

We do these to bring great gems into the kingdom and ensure that the generation after us know God and keep the faith. As the Bible said of David, our ministries in doing this is important as well as our skill in carrying out our duties. God is counting on us at whatever level we operate, whichever Church we serve in and in spite of what we think of ourselves. What we do matters!

God is looking for men and women with understanding and willing hearts to teach our children. We are called to nurture and disciple them till they become ministers themselves.

This manual is a product of many years of interaction with children, teenagers, their teachers in Church and parents. There has been substantial research and input from other sources applied in this compilation.

Attempts have been made to provide information that will help in understanding the audience and tools that will enhance our ministry to result in bringing our wards to an understanding of a relationship with Jesus and their place in His Church.

Olusola Sun Basonun.



HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

The manual is presented in two modules:

- **Basic Level**

For people who are starting in Children and Teenage ministry for the first time, or people who want to refresh and rejuvenate their ministry.

- **Advanced Level**

For people who want to take their ministry to a higher level.

The Basic consists of 7 modules, while the Advanced consists of 4 modules. It is advised that you go through the basic modules chronologically, to build up your understanding of the ministry, you may however go directly to the area you need help with.

A short self-assessment is provided at the beginning of the manual that helps you to have an understanding of your area of strength and need.

Please take time to follow the modules, select a module on the area of need and interest, study through and click on the hyperlinks for further instructions. There are workshop aspects of some modules, practicing them helps to achieve utmost assimilation.

We hope this manual will be a tool for ministry effectiveness.



ASSESSMENT

This assessment is designed to help you identify potential areas of growth in your ministry and provide you a guide on how to achieve them.

Children & Teenage ministry happens from birth to about age sixteen (16). Over time, we discovered the following 4 areas of opportunities are consistent throughout Children & Teenagers ministry.

LET'S GET STARTED

Use the following to rate your progress in your ministry.

Not yet: This is a new idea or something you have not considered.

About to: Something you are planning to start doing.

Improving: You have started seeing results and you are getting better at it.

Fully integrated: This is already established and working hard to sustain it.

SCORING

*OVERALL SCORE

Your overall score is 60.

*If you score below 40, it indicates that you are just getting started and there is significant room for improvement in your ministry.

*If you score above 40, it indicates you are doing well and simple adjustments will impact the results your ministry will be getting.

ASSESSMENT

***SCORE PER SECTION**

Maximum obtainable score per section is 15

*If you score below 10 in each section, it indicates that you are just getting started and there is significant room for improvement in your ministry.

*If you score above 10 in each, it indicates you are doing well and simple adjustments will impact the results your ministry will be getting.

Click [here](#) to get your assessment done.

You will get your score once you complete the assessment.

We will let you know your area of strength and places you need to improve on.

*** FURTHER STUDY**

The Leader

[The Leader](#)

Refine Message

[Age Group Insights,](#)

[Preparing bible lessons,](#)

[Presenting bible lessons,](#)

[Using technology in Children & Teenage ministry](#)

Build Community

[Links to Children & teenage Church start up,](#)

[How to share the gospel with children](#)

[Engaging parents](#)

Growth Plan

[Links to Spiritual growth,](#)

[Discipleship,](#)

[Spiritual discipline](#)

ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

THE LEADER

1. COMMON GOAL

We have well-articulated goals & vision which drive the leaders and determine all activities.

2. CONSISTENT MEETINGS

Our team meets regularly to make sure everyone is on the same page to drive goal and vision as a whole.

3. PERSONAL GROWTH

We encourage each leader to pursue study time & consistent fellowship attendance for personal spiritual growth.

REFINE MESSAGE

1. EVERYDAY FAITH

We develop and use contents & resources that practically equip children & teenagers to grow spiritually in their everyday lives.

2. AGE-GROUP INSIGHTS

We train leaders on characteristics of different age groups and life-phases to promote appropriate age group ministry and to acquire necessary skills to teach effectively.

3. WEEKLY LEADERS

We promote weekly interaction and preparation of Bible Lessons Plans that will be taught in our children ministry for leaders.

BUILD COMMUNITY

1. PARENTS CONNECT

We have specific programs to connect directly with parents, whereby design plans to support and equip them.

2. FAITH FOCUSED

Our curriculum & teachings are designed to bring children & teens to a more personal interaction with their faith and salvation experience.

3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We encourage other adults to get involved in discipleship & mentoring in the lives of children & teenagers.

GROWTH PLAN

1. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

We team up with parents to engage children & teenagers with intentional process to develop spiritual disciplines

2. BEYOND SUNDAY

We place high priority on being part of children & teenagers lives outside the four walls of the Church.

3. GROWTH PRIORITY

We teach basic principles of Christian Faith and Spiritual Disciplines.



BASIC

MODULE ONE

THE LEADER

Defining a Leader

The Call of God is fundamental to every service because it is God that Calls his people.

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Hebrews 5:4

A Children's Church leader is someone who is called to serve in the Children and Teenage ministry.

The purpose of the Call of God is for the equipping of the Church of God.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12

As you have committed to be in the Children Church, a leader must align with the message, objective or goal of the Children Church.

First, the Children Church Leader needs to identify;

I. The Constant (Non-changeable):

This includes the Message, which is the Good news. The Word



of God is unchangeable, leaders need to uniquely agree that they want to help children & teens to have faith in God and be a light to their world; that is the message we are putting out there! Everybody must be on this same page on the vision and goals of the ministry.

ii. The variables (Changeable):

This may include the methods of teaching, the channels of presentation, learning tools etc. The strategies to be adopted to articulate the Message is so important to the results and actualization of the intended goals and vision. As the world is evolving, a leader must keep abreast of the best ways to put the Word of God into the hearts of children & teenagers.

1. Understanding your Calling

The Children Church is where foundations are laid for destinies and spiritual growth. No matter how we view ourselves or how people view us, God is depending on us for the future of His Church, it is time to start seeing ourselves the way God sees us.

The Calling of God is basic to every service and it is Him alone that Calls a man to service. The Call comes in different ways, but God confirms His Call by granting us fruits.

How can you identify God's Call into the Children ministry?

i. **A natural yearning or desire:**

When a person is called to the Children ministry, he may have a genuine desire to serve in the ministry. Desire is a propeller, it produces passion and determination even when it gets rough along the way.

ii. **A sense of Call:**

This is when a person senses that God wants him to serve in The Children and Teens ministry. He might have this conviction to fill in a gap or a need that arises at a particular time, and discover that

this is his area of service.

iii. Exercise of gift:

When you are called into Children ministry, there are special gifts that might be evident in your life. You might realize you are just so comfortable getting the children together, arranging the chairs, connecting with that teenager that kept his cool during the Church Service, preparing the bible lessons etc.

These gifts flow naturally and effortlessly. In fact, they may be so natural to you that you may not be aware you are flowing in this grace, but others will notice.

In summary, in whatever way you realized the Call of God over your life, He confirms it by giving you fruits that will validate your Calling. For example; you may see tangible changes in the lives of the children and teens, parents testifying to the spiritual

growths in their children,
people affirming your service
etc.



2. Understanding your purpose:

The purpose for service in the Church of God is so that the body of Christ may be taught and equipped until we are all matured and trained for service. A Children & Teens minister must therefore fulfill the heart of God for this office. He must lead with knowledge and understanding to achieve the purpose of God.

Having a purpose provides ministers tools to evaluate, it enables you to avoid things that may be 'good', but do not fit into your purpose. Understanding your Children ministry purpose helps to define your programs and activities. It gives directions as to what to include in your programs and how to get it done.

3. Understanding your vision:

A vision gives the Children & Teens Church leaders something to work towards. It is a description of what you want your children and teenagers to be like after a certain period of time. Hence, different but appropriate resources and approaches will be harnessed to achieve such.

Vision helps you to know how to help children & teenagers at different stages of their lives

The Responsibilities of a Children and Teens Church Leader

Regardless of the size of a congregation, it is helpful to assign someone to supervise Children ministry. A person who has passion for the children, a gift of leading, commitment to the Church and a sense of Calling. The major tasks of the leader include the following:

- **Activities Coordination.**

He or She needs to work with others to plan and carry out a comprehensive program for children that includes worship, study, fellowship, service experiences, and other experiences that guide children as they grow in faith.

- **Recruiting volunteers.**

The quality of your team contributes largely to the success of your Children ministry. Recruiting should be approached with a sense of awe. You are offering an opportunity for someone to do the most significant thing they have ever done beyond accepting

Jesus Christ as their Saviour, which is service.

- **Volunteers' Training.**

Training is key to any successful Children ministry. Volunteers want to know what to do as much as you want them to serve alongside you. Provide orientation meetings which will include aligning them with the goal and vision of the ministry and the details of what is expected of them. Also ensure volunteers are equipped with the basics of Child Development and how this knowledge can be used to better minister to the children.

- **Children's Worship Services.**

An effective Children's Weekly Worship service is important. One way to reflect the truth of God's love is by welcoming children & teenagers into the Worship Service. You gain more momentum when Children Worship Service is interactive and well-presented to both parents and children. Every aspect of the service must be carefully considered and planned. The key to a good Children Worship Service is to develop a pattern that works well for you. Such as;

***Consistency**; those things you do every week, a general pattern that you follow which helps both your leaders and children to keep on track.

***Variety**; those things that set each session apart as special,



unique and never the same-old-thing.

- **Partnering with Parents.**

Have effective communication with parents, provide resources to engage their children, encourage them to serve and learn alongside their children to aid their children's spiritual growth.

- **Create an Engaging Environment.**

Children need stimulation. Create an engaging environment by using children-friendly furniture, colours, and décor, give opportunity to handy people in your Church to help build and create theme-based classrooms. The whole idea is to make learning exciting and inspiring for children & teens in Church.

- **Involve the Leadership.**

It is important that Children ministry goals & vision align with the overall mission & vision of the Church. Ensure the overall goal is being achieved through every worship service, programs and projects the Children ministry is into.

- **Uplift your Team**

He or She needs to uplift his team such that they are motivated to serve. Pray for your teachers and pray with your teachers. Celebrate them and their milestones, let them know that they are doing something important in the body of Christ. Encourage your Church to pray for and thank your Children ministry volunteers regularly.

- **Consistent Evaluation**

Evaluate the periodic performance of the Children ministry. He or She needs to observe, evaluate, and affirm leaders in order to help them understand their strengths and to encourage them in areas where improvement is needed.

- **Prayer**

One of the key components to a thriving Children/Teens ministry is prayer. He/ She needs to pray consistently for the Children & Teenagers, their families, for team members and for specific needs or challenges that might come up. Prayer is an assured way to make the supernatural available as you minister, it affects both the leaders and Children positively.



Some ways to Recruit & Train Volunteers

- * **Recruiting Volunteers**

Here are some ways you can recruit volunteers;

- **Pray**

Pray for the leading and direction of God to give you the right volunteers. In time, God will raise up volunteers to participate in serving alongside you through your Children ministry.

- **Cast a clear vision**

To get people to give up their time to serve God in the Children Church, they need to understand why it is important. Provide them in an easy to understand way a compelling reason of sharing the gospel and supporting parents in making disciples

of their children.

- **Go personal**

Your goal is not recruiting; it is starting a relationship. Get to know members of your Church, speak with believing adults in your neighborhood, learn about families, relate with colleagues at work. Ask great questions, and listen to their answers. Then, you can help them understand the roles your Church has that fit their passions and abilities.

- **Celebrate your existing team**

It is rare to get anyone to commit to doing anything without a tangible benefit or reward for themselves, but your volunteers are doing just that. Celebrate current leaders in front of the congregation, parents and Children. Express lots of appreciation for volunteers, and specify the impact people are having. As a result, others may take interest and want to get involved too.

- **Be passionate**

Passion is contagious. People are attracted to leaders with passion and vision, so if that naturally pours out of you, people will want to serve alongside you.

- **Connect with parents**

Parents are potential volunteers to serve in the Children ministry. Create opportunities to involve them in your services and programs, they might discover that there is a need they can meet or find out they are called to serve in the Children ministry.

- **Make it a big deal**

Put lots of enthusiasm, joy and commitment in what you do. Make sure children & teenagers know that serving in Children's ministry is a wonderful opportunity. That way, they will look forward to serving when they are old enough. Then recruit them! Teens make excellent assistants too. Serving in ministry gives them

opportunities to practice leadership skills.

*Training Volunteers

Before volunteers can start contributing, they must be equipped and trained, here are some tips;

- **Orientation**

Orientation is the best place to cast vision and share policies and procedures with potential volunteers. The most important part of this element of your orientation is explaining the “why” behind each policy. The “why” inspires people, not the policy. A policy alone can be disregarded but vision about why we do what we do creates enthusiastic compliance.

A clear job description; Make sure you clearly define the roles, responsibilities and characteristics of the person who would best fit a particular age group or position.

- **Periodic training**

Monthly or quarterly trainings & workshops designed to include the bigger picture elements, but getting more specific to targeted groups, like different age groups focus. Also provide opportunities for spiritual growth that can aid volunteers to have boldness and flexibility to try multiple roles or even multiple capacities to find the best fit for them.



- **Customized training**

This is a training tailored to people's experience and skill set. It is an attempt to engage volunteers based on their expertise. Some people are good content creators, some are skilled at creating learning tools, some have good story-telling abilities etc. Instead of creating a culture of micro-management, encourage key leaders to do things creatively based on what they know and have practiced over time. They can later become trainers themselves, training others to acquire such skills and knowledge.

- **Written Communication**

Send periodic or specific instructions or materials to your team. You may want to go over some basic policies and procedures again, or a short training on a Bible lesson or safety & behaviour management, e-newsletter, updates etc. Whatsapp is still one of the most effective ways to communicate. For e-mails, with easy templates and sending options through tools like Mailchimp & Sendfox. You can keep them short and focused, take advantage of this communication method, but do not over use them (once a month is great).

- **One-on-one**

Relationships are the key to training. The more your volunteers feel needed and known, the more sign-up you will get. Celebrate a well-done job, encourage them to share their stories of the differences they are making in the lives of children, get feedbacks. With this, you will see more ownership and growth in volunteers, and they will be eager to pour into others who serve alongside them.

- **Online resources and apps**

There are a load of blogs, articles and video training resources available if you would just find them and pass them on to your team. Be intentional about training them to find articles that apply to their team and pass them on.

5. Engaging Children in Worship Service

An effective Children Weekly Worship Service is important. Parental support will be either gained or lost through the environment created in the weekly meetings. It is important to create a welcoming and inviting space and plan experiences that include them in real tangible ways.

The elements of the weekly service include the following:

- **Welcoming**

Welcoming children and their parents into Church and into worship is one of the greatest, most sincere ways to create a warm, inviting atmosphere.

- **Praise and worship**

Singing songs serves as a valuable tool for teaching God's Word and truth to children, it is also a way for them to experience the awesomeness of God's presence. This is why it is important to ensure that children are engaged in the experience of worship. You could use;

*Simple songs and hand motions to teach younger children how to worship

*Soundtrack where they can sing along

*Play a video they can sing, dance and imitate the actions.

*Older children lead worship – through songs, words and actions.

- **Biblical lesson**

An effective teaching and ministry occur with small groups of children within a close proximity of age and development. An organized Children Ministry begins with a proper age-grading with the purpose of having a separate time of exciting Bible learning that includes stories, arts and crafts, songs and other interactive activities.

- **Play and fellowship**

Fun and learning are compatible. It is one of the ways we can make Church interesting for children & teenagers. It is unfair to bore children in the Church; We have the most exciting story of all time to tell, yet children's church does not generally have the reputation for being fun. Prepare exciting games & activities, laugh and play, make sure it is relevant and connect it with a Bible truth.

- **Refreshments**

Serving snacks in the Church is a way of showing hospitality. It is one way to demonstrate to children and families that you care, as long as it is allergy-free snacks. You can also give your snacks meaning, find ways to incorporate snack time into your lessons. Snacks can also be used for a reward system.

- **Prayer**

Teach children & teenagers to pray by first modeling it and encouraging them to lead prayers during service.

It will be beneficial for different age groups as part of effective teaching to have separate leaders in the nursery, preschool, elementary, pre-teens & teens sections so that closer attention can be given to children & teenagers.

MODULE TWO

AGE GROUP INSIGHTS

Children at different age levels have different gifts, interests, abilities, and challenges. As a teacher prepares for children and teens Church service and other programs, it's important for you to know what to expect from each age. Teaching styles and activities can therefore be developmentally appropriate.



AGES 2–3 (TODDLERS)

Peculiarities;

1. This age group is characterized with lots of play, tangible learning occurs when they play.
2. Expect big feelings, tantrums, simple sentences, pretend play, new thinking skills and much more.
3. Toddlers will enjoy playing with others, playing dress-ups, painting with their fingers or a brush.
4. Telling stories, singing and reading to them are fun things for children to do at this age.
5. They do lots of walking up and down and sometimes climbing, they cannot keep still on a spot for long.
6. Toddlers are now better at throwing, kicking and catching a ball.
7. They are loving and want to be loved, responsive to others and want their physical needs met.

Their needs:

- Lots of love and attention.
- Incorporate play into your lessons; play helps preschoolers express feelings like joy and excitement.
- Creative exploration such as painting, drawing and dress-up game, it is important that they explore and try new things out.
- They are charged with lots of energy, so they need movement-oriented activities.
- A firm but calm adult who can provide rules and safety.

AGES 4–5 (PRE-SCHOOLERS)

Peculiarities;

1. At this age, children are exploring and they are learning to express emotions, they do this in many ways – for example, by talking, using gestures, noises and in play.
2. They demand more attentions and eager to receive adult praises.
3. They learn by imitation and ask lots of questions because of their inquisitiveness
4. With direction, they'll learn to share their toys and take turns with other children.
5. Their attention span is very short and they love repetitive activities.
6. They are trusting and find it difficult to differentiate fictions from facts
7. From age 3, they get busy; cutting, pasting, painting, dancing, singing and jumping.
8. They are active and cannot sit still for a long time, they learn more through movement,



music and play, singing, dancing and acting.

9. Spiritually, they like the idea of God who is strong and friendly.

Their needs:

- Lots of love and attention.
- Incorporate play into your lessons; play helps preschoolers express feelings like joy and excitement.
- Creative exploration such as painting, drawing and dress-up game, it is important that they explore and try new things out.
- They are charged with lots of energy, so they need movement-oriented activities.
- A firm but calm adult who can provide rules and safety.



AGES 6–9 (ELEMENTARY)

Peculiarities:

1. They are active and love to talk a lot.
2. They may have trouble differentiating fantasy from reality.
3. They begin to value friendships and become more involved in activities like sports and games.
4. Enjoy competitions, but may not be able to lose cheerfully.
5. Friendship tends to be gender-based mainly with members of the same sex
6. They love being the center of

attraction and show-off accomplishments proudly.

6. Their emotions are near the surface; they cry and laugh easily.

Their needs:

- They need adults who can set and provide appropriate limits, guidelines and expectations.
- Lots of praise and affirmations.
- Encouragement to express themselves and take up new challenges.
- Need lots of activities that build their self-esteem and confidence.
- Activities that allow them to think and ask questions about spiritual things.

AGE 10–12 (PRE-TEENS)

Peculiarities:

1. This stage marks the beginning of puberty for many and a sense of body image begins to develop

2. Peer acceptance becomes more important at this age.

3. They become more expressive and energetic, this makes them more daring and competitive.

4. During this period, pre-teens are forming an internal code of moral values, largely based on what they learn from parents and other adults.



5. They have more control of their emotions, and may start shying away from open displays of affection.
6. They become more secretive, withdrawn, spend a lot of time alone and need privacy

Their needs:

- They need to relate with adults they can trust and confide in.
- Encouragement to express themselves without fear of punishment.
- Lots of affirmation and motivation; offer frequent praise and positive rewards for desired behaviour, this reinforces pathways in a pre-teen's mind and spirit.
- Promotion of creative expression, that is, their skills and talents.
- Create ways for connections such as movies, creative learning, gist time etc.
- Deeper spiritual concepts and good thinking skill.

AGES 13 –17 (TEENAGERS)

Peculiarities:

1. It is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood and it is marked with lots of physical, mental, social and spiritual changes.
2. During these years, teenagers increase their ability to think abstractly and eventually make plans and set long term goals; they begin to think logically and critically; begin to question things they once believed.
3. Have a strong desire to assert individuality and independence; they want independence from parents and rules.
4. Teenagers are developing their own identity, a unique identity that is separate from that of their parents.
5. They are more likely to take risks, be sleepy, misread emotions, and give in to peer-pressure
6. Peer influence and acceptance become very important.
7. More social awareness, wavering faith, conflicts and doubts are characterized by this stage.

8. Relationship with opposite sex also become important.

Their needs:

- Supportive adult connection and quality time for hangout, play, talk and connect.
- Encouragement to talk to a trusted adult about problems and concerns, even if it is not you he or she chooses to talk with.
- At this phase, they need adults who can listen, affirm and pray with them.
- Adults that can provide

consistent, loving discipline with limits and rewards.

- Create opportunities for them to serve and showcase their talents and gifts Make church a 'safe haven' for them where they find a sense of belonging.

When you have an understanding of different age level insights for toddlers, preschoolers, elementary children, pre-teens and teenagers, you will be able to explore the most effective ways to minister to each age group and discover the suitable teaching styles to use. It will also help you plan your lessons and how best to connect with each child's physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development.



MODULE THREE

PREPARING BIBLE LESSONS

For a Bible lesson to be life-changing, careful preparation must be done. It is essential that the best methods and materials are employed for maximum effectiveness. When children & teenagers come under your teaching and instructing, they should know that they will leave much better, changed and loved.

If there is a pre-existing curriculum, you may have to tweak it a little, so as to add life and excitement to it, and if a lesson has to be built from scratch, make sure to follow the guidelines.

5 Steps when preparing your Bible lesson;

1. Study the Word

First point of call when preparing is to ask 'What does God want me to teach?' A Children or Teens minister needs to sit with the Word of God to meditate and allow the Holy Spirit to work the lesson right into his own life first.

- Checkup references
- Compare scriptures
- Ascertain the relevance of the lesson in the lives of your audience

From your study, you will be able to deduce what the passage of scripture is saying, what it means and how it applies to the lesson. This helps to lay the background for your Bible lesson.

2. Put the lesson into perspective

Discover the most important truth from the passage. What is the central message emphasized in that particular Scripture? Then decide different aspects of the lesson.

Pre-Class Component

These are the parts of lesson that need to be prayerfully worked on before teaching the lesson in classroom.

- *The lesson objective*

This is the aim of your lesson. What decisions and changes are you expecting the children and teenagers to make at the end of the lesson? This is so important to the flow of your lesson because it gives direction and purpose to whatever you want to teach.

- *The Title*

Make the lessons look attractive by tagging them with catchy, fanciful and age-appropriate titles. For example, if you want to teach the concept of forgiveness to a group of 13 years plus, your title could be 'Prison Break', this title captures the truth that when a person forgives, he breaks free from every form of prisons, spiritual, emotional etc.

- *The Background Scriptures*

It is so key for the effectiveness of a lesson to have its root in the Scripture. No matter what the intended lesson is about, there should be a place to get it in the Scripture. Always use the Bible as your authority. Make sure the children know the Word of God is your source.

In-Class Components

These are body parts of a bible lesson that must be taught during the actual teaching in a classroom

a. Introduction

The introduction of a lesson sets the pace and atmosphere of a class. An introduction must be able to grab the attention of young people and carry potential to arouse their curiosities, this will lighten up the class and allow engagement right from the start of the lesson. Prepare different methods of teaching to introduce the lesson, you can use Games, Drama, Object lesson etc.

b. Bible Study

At the heart of every Bible lesson is the Bible. It draws the Bible truth from Scripture and shows its relevance to the lives and thoughts of young people. It is important to open the bible in class for every age. Our emphasis should not be on the characters, locations, events of the story, but on the bible truth of that scripture. Plan to make the Bible study engaging by using different methods to involve everyone at this stage.

Memory verse

This should be included in your study and emphasized throughout the lesson. Children & Teenagers have the capacity to retain God's Word. Choose a good memory verse for your lesson, the verse should sum up the lesson objective and plan to teach it creatively.

i. For ages 1–5: Tell bible stories from the Bible, you can support your story telling by showing the video of the Bible story, or you act out the bible story with the help of the children, and the repetition helps the children to remember the bible story. It is recommended that you use more than one method.

ii. For Ages 6–9: This age group can read well. Let them read by themselves by opening modern and easy to read versions of the Bible together or one after the other and ask them questions as a class to test their level of understanding and allow responses individually.

iii. For ages 10 and above: Divide them into groups, assign portions of the scriptures to each group and let them answer questions from the passages, and at the end of the discussion, let a representative from each group present answers agreed upon by the group.

c. Application

It is important for children & teenagers to connect the Bible truth learnt to their everyday life. This part deals with how the Bible truth applies to real life situations. A Bible lesson without application is mere information, it should reinforce how they can put God's Word into daily life.

d. Response

Plan to give children & teens the opportunity to respond to what has been learnt. This is the reaction point where they will decide what they will do differently as a result of what they have learnt in the lesson. Those that do not have a relationship with Jesus should be given an opportunity to do so and those that are saved should have the opportunity to use the lesson to grow their faith.

3. Age-appropriateness

This is all about identifying what is relevant and important at the developmental phase of the lives of the children & teens in your care. When a minister has adequate age group insights of the phase or audience is in right now and the next phase of their lives, he or she would be able to tailor the Bible lessons according to their needs. What is being taught must be useful to them at their present phase of their lives.

A children & teens minister needs to put the age-group he is to teach in view when preparing, so as to determine which most suitable teaching methods, learning tools and activities to adopt.

4. Creative Teaching Methods

Research has shown that children learn best in a variety of ways. Which has been grouped in different ways into seven categories:

Verbal (words),
Spatial (pictures),
Kinesthetic (movement),
Musical (music),
Logical (reasoning),
Interpersonal (people), and
Intrapersonal (self-discovery).

To have a lesson that reaches each child in your classroom, incorporate something in each of these different categories. A teacher needs to be creative enough to accommodate different styles of learning of children.

When a Bible truth is being presented in a scripturally sound and attractive way, it will be indelibly inscribed with clarity and relevance in the minds of children & teenagers for a longer period of time. Make it fun, make it exciting, incorporate play, laugh, sing, explore, discuss, research, give responsibilities, solve problems together etc. However, remember that without the Holy Spirit, even the most creative teaching methods and approaches will not produce the expected impacts.

5. Pray

Ministering to children & teenagers is a spiritual exercise, it is not an academic exercise, which is why we need the Holy Spirit to breathe on all the preparations and allow God's Word to gain access into the hearts of young people you are teaching. No matter what we do, no matter the different methods and learning tools we employ, it is the Holy Spirit that imprints understanding in their hearts.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

PREPARING BIBLE LESSONS

*against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12 (KJV)*

You can use the worksheet template to [prepare your lesson](#).

MODULE FOUR

PRESENTING BIBLE LESSONS

Once you have taken time to plan and prepare your lesson, it is time to teach real life children and teens. Teaching does not end with a good lesson, it is imperative that varieties of teaching methods, learning tools, and different channels of presentation are incorporated into the lesson so as to cover various learning styles of children and teens in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Different learning tools for each components of a good Bible lesson

Introduction

This is the opening of your lesson. It is at this point you build interest, create anticipation and involvement for the rest of the lesson.

These are some tools that can be used to introduce your Bible lesson;

- i. Discussion
- ii. Case Study
- iii. Videos
- iv. Games
- v. Object lessons

Bible Study

This is the life of the lesson, the Word of God must be taught undiluted and accurately.

You can do your Bible study with some of these tools;

- i. Storytelling
- ii. Puppet show

- iii. Paper Craft
- iv. Role Play
- v. Grouping
- vi. Drama
- vii. Videos
- viii. Creative Memory verse etc.

Application

Children & Teenagers should be able to discover the implications of the truth in God's Word and be given the opportunity to apply it in their real lives.

Here are some creative tools to use for this part of your lesson;

- i. Puzzles
- ii. Games
- iii. Activity Songs & Dances
- v. Questionnaires
- vi. Paper Craft etc.



Response

Ask what your young people need to do differently as a result of the Bible truth they have learnt.

Some tools of evaluating your lesson;

- i. Discussion
- ii. Questionnaires
- iii. Puzzles
- iv. Group activities etc.

Different learning Tools

1. Story Telling

Children have natural in-built love for stories. Good stories captivate the imagination and attention of children. It provides an excellent way of getting the Gospel across to them and in communicating values and ideas in an easy-to-understand way. It has a beautiful way of persisting in the memory of children if it is presented well.

Specifically, children learn to listen, follow a sequence of events, increase their vocabulary, envisage the scenario of the story being told and apply them in the real world. It also helps them to retain in their memory longer whatever is being taught. Storytelling has the ability to use all the sense organs, which makes the lesson more concrete for the children.

When using stories

- i. Do not use complex concepts that would be too difficult to understand.
- ii. Make use of things and settings that are familiar
- iii. Use repetition, songs or phrases that can catch their attention.
- iv. Center on one character.
- v. Watch your language, do not use offensive words.
- vi. Let it be short and appropriate to their age
- vii. Allow children to ask questions at the end

Some people are born story-tellers, while some have to learn it. When it is time to retell an event in the Bible, at times children groan with boredom, because somehow we have managed to drain the wonders out of the most wondrous, true story of all.

How to be a good story Teller

- Find stories that are suitable for the age group you are teaching. They should not last more than five to ten minutes at most.

- Give life to stories. Do not just read the story out, but add excitement to it as you retell the story
- Make the story descriptive so that the children can visualize the story in their imaginations.
- Know the story by heart and rehearse it until you can tell it with confidence
- Make sure to use visual aids and sound effects.

Keys to improve your storytelling skills

Key #1 Let your stories S. O.A.R

One of the best ways to engage children in a story is to find ways to involve them in the telling;

Sounds

When looking for ways to encourage participation, first look for sounds. Allow children supply sound effects, e.g. animals, storm, airplane, earthquake, train etc.

Objects

Look for objects that have roles in the event, or brainstorm ways to use simple props to help you tell the story. They will pay close attention because their curiosity and interest is heightened.

Actions

Identify key actions that took place or ways to act on what happened in the story. Invite the children to join in the movement or drama, by doing this, you are engaging them and creating an atmosphere where participation is safe.

Repetition

Capitalize on repetitions that naturally occur within an event. It might be repetition of a specific phrase, e.g. "And God looked at what he made and it was good!" It helps to place emphasis on the message in the story.

Key #2: The same Story can be told in different ways

Do you realize that although Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all tell the story of Jesus' life, they all tell it differently, and they all tell it right?

How?

Well, because these books were written by different authors led by God's Spirit writing to different audiences telling different aspects of Jesus' life and ministry.

So it is today. We are, each of us, different and unique storytellers telling God's story to different audiences, and there is not one "right way" to tell his story. With this realization, you should take the pressure off. Simply relax and tell the story without worrying about getting every word right.

The best storytellers combine careful and thoughtful preparation with a warm sense of spontaneity. So do not try to tell the story right, just strive to tell it well. Do not worry so much about how the story is supposed to go; pay attention to how it is going and respond to your audience by adapting it to connect with them.

Key #3: Engage the Story by Practicing It

As you practice your story, say it aloud, but do not try to memorize the words. Instead, try to enter the story, look around, and talk about what you see. As you prepare, first tell the story with lots of actions and gestures. Then tell it without any. Then try using a few props. As you practice, rehearse your movement, inflection, and gestures. Let your body help you tell the story, and let the stories develop with each retelling.

Also, remember to keep your listeners in mind as you prepare. Try to shape the story in a way that they will understand, relate to, and then enter into for themselves.

By the way, the places where storytellers typically stumble are at the beginning, the end, and at the transitions to and from audience participation sections. So as you practice, pay special attention to those parts of the story.

Key #4: Stay Focused on the Story

Rather than asking lots of questions during the story, which distracts children, stay focused on the story's action and emotion. As you talk, watch your children. Look at their faces to see if they understand and enjoy the story. You can usually tell if you are making a story too long or too frightening by the size of their eyes. Adapt to their reactions. Keep your stories short, simple, and action-packed. Remember, the younger the kids, the shorter the story.

If children are unfamiliar with a story, consider telling it first, before inviting them to act it out. That way they will understand what is going on. After telling the whole story, say, "Okay, everyone! Now, let's have some fun with this story! Let's act it out!"

Most of all, be you. Relax and enjoy. Use your unique set of gifts to tell the story the way God shaped you to communicate. Tell it from your heart, smile, and have fun.

2. Object Lesson

Object lesson adopts the eyes and other senses to make learning more participatory. It is using the familiar things around children & teenagers to teach a lesson. Something physical is used as a metaphor to teach an abstract concept or principle.

You can use tangible objects such as insects, fruits, animals, tools, food etc. - to teach intellectual and spiritual truths.

A Sample of an Object lesson- JUST LIKE HIM

Materials: Mirror, Paint, Handkerchief

What to do and say:

Ask the children if they have seen a mirror before and what it is used for.

Bring out a mirror and pass it round, ask two or three children to describe their faces

Explain that mirrors reflect our faces and images; it shows us what we look like. God's word does exactly for us, it helps us see how we are.

#Smear your face with some paint and let the children have fun laughing at you.

#Use the mirror, show surprise on how you look and start cleaning your face. Tell the children that more importantly, we make positive changes as we read the Word of God and people around us will be able to see what it is like to be a Christian by watching how we live our lives and be convinced to live a Christian lives too.

3. Skits or Drama

Skit or Drama is a learning tool that allows children & teenagers to participate and demonstrate different characters in the lessons. It is an opportunity to develop confidence in expressing their ideas, talents and gifts. This particular learning tool highly promotes acceptance and interactions with others.

Tips when using Skits or Drama

- Don't over use it
- It must have relevance to the lesson, it must not feature in isolation.
- Costumes & Props. Everyday items could be used to create different props and costumes
- Scripts are not so important. The important thing is that everybody understands the storyline and can improvise
- Cast everybody. It is often best if the entire class participates.

4. Discussion

This is perhaps the cheapest teaching method or tool. It is therefore used by many children and teens ministers who, almost always, have to operate on a very small budget. It however, requires lots of preparation; lots of research and teachers' resourcefulness.

Benefits of Discussion

- It stimulates interest and thinking
- It develops skills of observation, analysis and logic

- It often helps young ones to solve their own problems.
- It helps ministers to evaluate children and teens' knowledge.
- It fosters togetherness and teamwork.
- It strengthens corrections.

How to navigate Discussion in your classroom

Identify the objective

Be sure to state or write the objective where everyone can see it and refer to it as needed throughout to keep the conversation on topic.

Preparation

Make sure to prepare questions to guide and steer the discussion. These questions should challenge your teenagers and be specific enough to allow critical thinking. Also provide opportunities for your teenagers to prepare for the discussion, even if it is five minutes, allow them to quickly read up or research to allow them to give constructive opinions. This preparation limits the possibility of getting off-track during the discussion.

Stimulate their interests

Discussions could be boring or exciting, irrelevant or interesting. To make the discussion exciting and interesting, the teacher must first show enthusiasm for the topic. Be mindful of what is relevant to your teenagers and weave them into your discussions.

Engage them

Avoid stifling their questions and opinions so as to allow them to think critically and creatively. The whole idea is to have your teenagers articulate their thoughts, analyze the points made, and discuss any new information they acquire. You also want them to know how to disagree in a healthy and respectful manner, and perhaps come to some sort of a consensus.

Affirm and summarize

The teacher must give weight or importance to the questions and opinions of the students, this effort helps to build their self-confidence and communication skills. Affirm their ideas, mention the not-so-corrects stands and rap up with bible-based opinion

on the topic.

5. Case Study

A case study is an account of an activity, event or problem that contains a real or hypothetical situation and includes the complexities you would encounter among teenagers.

It could be a real bible story

A true story or fiction

It is a process of in-depth analysis of an event or subject of study.

When using Case Study

- i. Avoid questions that can be answered with yes or no.
- ii. Ask questions that seek your children & teens opinions.
- iii. Avoid suggesting the right answer.
- iv. Do not be quick to reject ideas that may seem wrong.
- v. Round up with Bible-based opinion.

6. Videos

Video content is more relatable, engaging and can achieve much in less time. A minister using video as a tool must be deliberate about the choice of content and relevance to the lesson that is about to be taught. The objective is to give more understanding to the lesson.

Vital things to note when using videos:

- i. Duration: have a good grasp of the attention span of your class, then determine the length of video and at what point it will be used.
- ii. Content: understand your target audience. Teenagers like popular culture while children love animated content or cartoons.
- iii. Quality of video: source for good videos online that align with your faith beliefs and have relevance to the lesson. You can also create your own videos using simple apps or editing tools.

7. PowerPoints or Slide Show

This is a convenient way of using visuals to teach. You can create

age-appropriate colourful slides containing videos, games, pictures into your presentation.

- When using PowerPoints
- Tell your story with humour
- Do not use too much text
- Represent your content visually with images
- Use bullet points
- Be mindful of your font style and size
- Use more animations.

8. Creative Memory Verse

There are various ways of teaching Memory Verse without losing its meaning and will encourage the scripture to be remembered easily.

Some ideas on how to teach Memory Verses

- i. Word Scrabbles
- ii. Scavenger Hunt
- iii. Last-in First-out
- iv. Puzzles
- v. Sing the Scripture
- vi. Movement games & activities

9. Paper Craft

Paper craft is the art of folding, cutting and pasting paper to make objects, cards, toys etc. Do not use it in isolation, let it be an activity to teach your lesson.

Some Tips

- i. Practice before class how to make it and integrate it into the lesson
- ii. Assist the children & teens with cutting and folding, guiding them step by step.
- iii. It is not a graded project, so do not insist on a perfect finish.

Here is a sample of paper Craft

Moving Fish Paper Craft

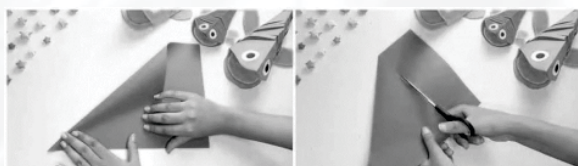


Materials

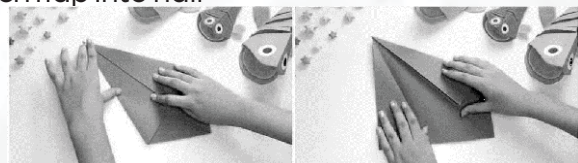
Scissors, Glue, Black Marker, Pencil, Paper

Instructions

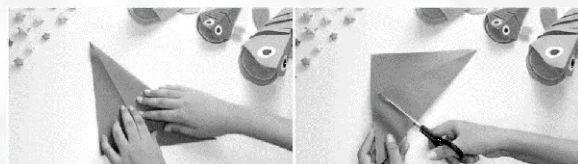
Cut your paper into a square size



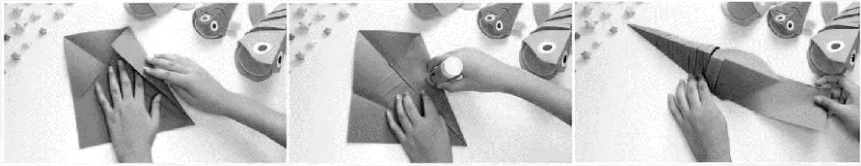
Fold into two and grease the middle, open it up, place vertically and fold each flap into half



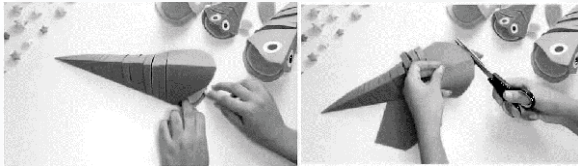
Straighten it back into perfect half and start cutting the inner side into the middle crease



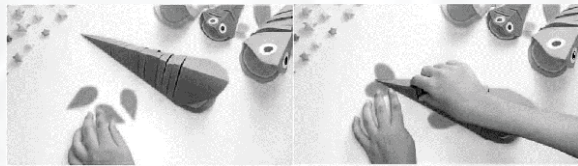
After cutting, glue the outer flaps together. Then insert a flat round mouth cardboard to create the lower jaw.



Trim the sharp mouth into round shape



Cut out the fins, tail and eyes, use a black marker to draw the eyes and glue them on the fish



10. Puzzles

This is a game, toy or problem that tests a person's cleverness or knowledge. In a puzzle, the solver is expected to put pieces together in a logical way, in order to arrive at the correct or fun solution of the puzzle.

We have different types of puzzles; Code word, Word fit, Picture, Word search, Crossword, Jigsaw, etc. They can be used to introduce a lesson, teach memory verse or review a lesson.

Some Tips

- i. Solve all puzzles before ever giving to children and teens
- ii. Always link the puzzles to the lesson
- iii. Give assistance where necessary, especially to those who might find it difficult

iv. Balance your time.

1. How to create a Word Search puzzle

- *Think of the words to put in your puzzle.
- *Create a grid
- *Put the words in the grid.
- *Clean up the puzzle by putting in filler letters for the remaining spaces.
- *Make copies, use it in your class to teach and have fun!



2. How to create a Picture puzzle?

- *Select a picture or a design
- *Glue a piece of thin cardboard (colored card) the size of your photo.
- *Use a pencil to trace out shapes on the back of the puzzle. You could do this freehand, or trace around jigsaw puzzle pieces if you have any.
- *Carefully cut out the shape using a craft knife
- *Shuffle them together and your children & teens are ready for a fun learning time!

11. Games

Games as learning tools are simple, effective and fun ways of lowering literacy barriers and capturing attention & interest of children & teenagers. This learning experience allows children and teenagers to discover things for themselves in a real and tangible way. However, not all games are suitable for use in church.

For a game to qualify as teaching aid, it must be able to teach or review bible facts or truth, develop skills in applying bible to life,

Types of games

a. Introductory games: These are games used in order to introduce the lesson in an interesting manner, for example, 'The price is Right', 'Share your Dream' etc.

b. Ice breaker or mixer: These are games which are used to help the students relax and feel more comfortable with one another. Helping to create an atmosphere that is conducive for the teaching examples are Cookies Sort, Scavenger Hunt etc.

c. Review games: Used to review lessons already taught

d. Teaching games: These are used to teach certain concepts for example Body Works (used to teach the concept of the church function as the human body)

Games could be used for both small and large groups because they are exciting. But clearly explain rules because it is easy for children to go rowdy. Remember to try games ahead so as to become familiar with the process and have an idea of the amount of time it will take.

There are tons of games online, game books in stores and indigenous games around you that can be modified and adapted to teach in your classroom, use them appropriately and also learn to create yours.

A Sample of a Game

The Price is Right (Oju Oja)

Materials needed:

Empty tins of milk or beverages, empty cereal bags, carton of sugar etc.

Likely Topics:

Self-worth, Value system etc.

Play the game

Bring pre-determined objects mentioned above to class with a

determined price (market price). Divide class into two teams, which will compete by trying to determine the price of each object when you lift it up. The team that nearly guesses the right price of the objects without exceeding it wins 10points. The team with the most points wins the game. Present the winning team with a good price.

Debrief this game relating it to self-worth

Explain to your children/teens; you have been purchased by a God who saw that you were worth far more than you ever could have imagined, and so He bought you at a high cost just to prove it. A life was given in exchange for you and purchased by the blood of Jesus.

12. Activity Songs & Dance

Preschoolers love singing! Songs are not just fun, but also an energetic experience that gets them excited and helps them to learn bible truth and memory verse as well. Use new songs, rhymes, melody with lots of motions.

Why songs?

Song is one of the most appealing activities for them.

It stimulates movement, as they dance and jump about.

Repetition emphasizes knowledge; a bible truth can be well registered by singing it repeatedly.

It is full of fun!

You can use the worksheet template to present your lesson.

Classroom Management

God expects order in our assemblies and that does not exclude the Children Church.

“But be sure that everything is done properly and in order”.

1 Corinthians 14:40 (NLT)

Classroom management is a wide variety of skills and techniques that help a teacher to run the classroom smoothly without disruptive behaviours from Children in Church. It entails creative

ways of having a learning environment in your worship services with clear rules and disciplines that promote learning as well as consequences aimed at reducing behaviours that get in the way of learning in Church.

There is a need to establish rules and discipline in the classroom, but with the right attitude, passion and utmost goal of seeing Children grow to love God.

Here are some tips that will help you with your classroom management;

- **Prayer**

Start with prayer for each child you are serving in your classroom, prayer should not be your last resort. Spend a little extra time with the Lord for those who you are finding challenges to help.

- **Warm Welcome**

It is natural for anyone to feel loved when he is approached with love and excitement. Welcome each child warmly into the classroom and make a genuine effort to connect with some aspect of each Child's life. For example; 'How is your little brother doing?', 'You are looking so gorgeous in your red gown this morning' etc.

Let it show in your words and actions that you are truthfully glad to have them in Church.

- **Be prepared**

It is important to make Children feel that you care for them. When your classroom is well set up and you are ready to engage them on a personal level, they will in most cases try to be well-behaved. Building relationships is still one of your best tools for classroom management.

Take a real interest in the children's needs and minister to them. Children will reciprocate what is displayed in front of them.

- **Set ground rules**

Before you set rules for your class, it is important to understand the developmental level of the age group you are teaching, as it will help you plan appropriate rules and disciplines to be used, the manner of approach and how to mete consequences for the particular age.

Ages 1–5

Your rules will be more successful if you keep them short and simple to avoid confusion. You will also have more success getting your children to follow the rules if you use concrete rules which can be easily shown to them with pictures.

Example;

*Eyes Looking

*Helping Hands

*Walking Feet

*Ears Listening

*Stay in your space

*Voices Quiet etc.



Ages 6–9

When deciding your classroom rules for this age group, try to cover every behavioral issue that could come up on any given day. Some of the common classroom management issues include talking out of turn, bothering classmates, failing to stay on task, or failing to follow directions.

*Come with your Bible and notebook

*Be kind and polite to others.

*Keep your hands and feet to yourself.

*Listen to your teacher when he is talking

*Be safe and careful of sharp objects.

- *Share with others when it is craft time.
- *Raise your hand when you would like to speak in class.

Ages 10- 12

This age group wants to know what you want them to do, and they know that there are consequences for failing to follow the rules. Of course, your rules should provide guides that encompass the foundation you have deemed necessary for fostering a healthy and respectful learning environment in your classroom.

- *Pay attention in class
- *Treat others respectfully
- *Give your opinion without hurting others
- *Be safe and do not hit your friends.
- *Make sure to contribute in group activities
- *Use good words on your friends etc.

Ages 13 and above

There are a number of different ways to create a list of classroom rules for you teenagers. You could do it all yourself, setting the rules however you see fit. Another way is to collaborate by seeking suggestions from your teenagers; you might even have them vote on which rules they prefer. The benefit of this method is that it allows you to learn more about what kind of classroom environment your teenagers favor. Some possible rules for your teens' classroom include:

- *Be punctual
- *Use your cellphone or device when it required for an activity
- *No food or drink is allowed during service
- *Respect and be courteous to your friends and teachers.
- *Be a team player
- *Use positive languages
- *Never pack up unless it is time to leave etc..

- **Create a system and discipline process**

Do not wait until problems arise to create a discipline plan. Teacher needs to include details about how to handle common behavioral problems—and when to seek help for the “bigger” issues as well.

While you are making the rules, consider making the consequences as well. In order for children to respect the rules, they have to realize what is going to happen when they break them.

Consequence helps children see that their choices determined what happened. This brings accountability into the picture. However, consequence must maintain Children's dignity and be logically related to the deed.

For example, if children hurt someone else, they must do something kind for him or her. Connected, immediate consequences can lead to significant changes in children's behavior.

Note also that positive consequences for appropriate behavior or exceptional effort also need to be used to reinforce constructive actions. Examples are: specific verbal recognition, handshakes, high fives, thumbs up, smiles, and earned privilege such as being the teacher's assistant. Other acknowledgments could be a positive phone call or note sent home to a parent.

You may have a process like this;

- i. For a first time violation of rules– gently remind them of what the rule is as the case may be.
- ii. When the child still keeps at the misbehavior, ask him to state what the rule is in your classroom.
- iii. For the third violation, mete out the consequence related to the deed.
- iv. If the child gets out of line and more serious correction than you can give is necessary, send for the parents to come and discipline the child.

- **Reinforce the classroom's rules**

If rules are continually taught, Children & Teenagers will have less of an excuse for misbehavior. Make sure you have your classroom rules reinforced almost all the time to have them reminded.

Different Personalities

As much as you want to maintain rules and still demonstrate the love of God toward Children in your classroom, it is also important to factor personalities into the equation. Children often hear rules through the grid of their God-given personalities.

- **Strong-willed child:**

For this Child, a firm hand early in the class is required which may evolve into a discipline problem without guidance.

What to do?

- i. Always ensure that the Child sits on the first roll to allow closer monitoring.
- ii. If the Child keeps at the misbehaviour, let him stand up and face the wall for some times, and make sure to rejoin him with class when he quiet down.
- iii. Never administer physical discipline to your Children & Teenagers, involve the parents at this point if the child refuses correction.

- **Attention seeker:**

This child often whines and cries to get attention and sympathy from you. He either has one complaint or the other or begs you not to inform his parents when he misbehaves.

What to do?

- i. Do not overlook any manipulative behavior, but correct explicitly in love so he can realize what he is doing.
- ii. Make him own up with his behavior and not blame others for his actions
- iii. Also involve the parents if the behavior is a consistent habit that needs to be handled specially.

- **Fun-loving child:**

This one may be busy talking with their friends and forget the rules all of a sudden. They usually respond well to warm, loving words and something they find enjoyable.

What to do?

- i. Provide a warning and time for such to respond.
- ii. You can also use exciting activities as bait to redirect his attention back to the class. You might say, "I wonder if we can get everybody to listen up? Then we will have time to play a game."
- iii. Also use encouragement to help them emotionally when they are stuck.

When teachers enforce a classroom management plan and rules, as well as build positive relationships with their children/teenagers, they will more likely develop self-discipline and learning will take place.

You can use the worksheet template to [present your lesson](#).

MODULE FIVE

CHILDREN & TEENS CHURCH START-UP

The purpose for which you are creating a Children Church must be clearly defined and clarified. The purpose is for children & teenagers to experience the love of God through your teachings until they mature and become ministers themselves. It is more than child care while parents worship at the adult church. Children & Teenagers have unbelievable potential and desire to learn about Jesus and they need a place for specific spiritual engagement.

Steps to start your children/teens Church

1. Select a team

Identify and select people who have passion for Children & Teens ministry that will decide and direct the program, which will help to create a process or system to work with, will inspire others to join in the service and develop volunteers to become leaders themselves.

2. Decide the age-groups

Decide age groups you can conveniently cater for depending on the available facilities, number of volunteers you have and the budget of the Church. The reason why you need to group the different ages you might have is because children are going through different phases of life and these phases will determine the needs and relevant topics to be taught.

Age groups could range from age 1-16 years, and it is important that you note the children to be grouped into this ranges;

Ages 1–5

Ages 6–9

Ages 10–12 and

Ages 13 & above

Within these age groups, you can further divide, for example, ages 1–5 can be divided into age groups 1–3 and 4–5 depending on all the factors mentioned above.

3. Create beautiful facilities and environment

Provide a conducive environment where there is sufficient space and air. Make or buy furniture that is comfortable and appropriate for children and teenagers depending on your budget. Be creative and resourceful in decorating your class; you don't necessarily have to get a large budget, you can paint walls with bright colours, paste beautiful and educative pictures, use colourful cardboards to make different crafts, paste nice quotes on the walls etc. Also, ensure to get rid of the clutter to avoid accidents.

4. Determine your Curriculum

There are different options for which curriculum you may want to use.

- Ready-to-use curriculum
- You may choose to develop and write your own.
- Rich and highly engaging resources online that you can explore if you are looking for one.
- You can also subscribe for different materials on some Christian websites.

Whatever you choose to do, you might need to work on the lesson plans to suit your Church and the age group you want to teach.

5. Partner with families

Reach out to parents within and outside the Church. Your community is your potential ground to get children & teenagers to attend service. It is also important to let the church and parents know about your programs and activities ahead of time.

6. Policies & Procedures

It is important to set this straight at the very beginning, so volunteers will be fully aware of how things are supposed to be run in the Children Church. It should be printed preferably. This could include;

- Meeting time for preparation: this is very important to review and preview the lessons that will be taught, you are sure you will do your best when you are teaching the children & teens because you are well prepared.
- System of receiving children into the Church
- How to handle a difficult child
- What kind of foods are allowed
- How teacher should relate with opposite sex
- Safety measures
- How to communicate with parents etc.

7. Recruit, Screen and Train volunteers

- You may start by asking people who have served in a children and teens ministry to join you, also look out for volunteers who enjoy interacting with children & teenagers, interested parents etc.
- However, it is key that a background check should be done for any volunteer, you don't want a pervert to be in charge of your children & teenagers.
- Also train your volunteers, they need to be trained on what and how to do things, you could mix new recruits with long-time serving teachers for in-house training. More importantly, teachers need training on how to prepare and present their Bible lessons and make Church fun for children & teenagers.

8. Leverage on technology

The world has gone digital. We need to harness the good aspect of technology to our advantage. Choose technology that can help keep the children & teenagers engaged and impacted both during and outside Church, also technology that can help with communication, both with the children & teens and their parents.

9. Pray ceaselessly

The future is now, therefore, children & teenagers are the future of the church. Since they come from different backgrounds of life, we need to pray always that God's word should find its way in their hearts so that they grow spiritually, mentally, emotionally, intellectually, physically & socially and for continuous increase. Also for the volunteers, that God should supply grace to do His work as he desires.

10. Evaluate

Leaders need to evaluate things that have been done for the first few weeks into the program. Appraise periodically each element and talk about what is working or not and find ways to improve.

Giving a name to your Children ministry

What is in a name?

Oftentimes, the first piece of information you have about a person or a group of people is their name. It is most likely the first thing you learn about them and you quickly form an opinion based on such.

Naming your ministry is a big deal. One of the most important decisions you need to make in your ministry is your choice of names because to children & teenagers, names go beyond identification, names spur curiosity, excitement and spark imaginations among them. When it comes to the Children ministry, names matter—a whole lot.

Names are compelling, if a new child or teen visits your church,

you want him to know right away or have an idea of the experiences that have been designed for him. Also parents will see church as a fun and safe place for their children.

When considering a name for your Children ministry

- Connect it with name of your Church

You could tie the name of your Children ministry to have a built-in connection with the driving force or vision of the overall church. This type of connection is great because it allows for limitless themes.

- Connect it with a Scripture

You could name your ministry based on a real spiritual depth, by creatively drawing inspiration from a Scripture, but ensure it is children & teens- friendly and exciting.

- Connect it with a practical Concept

Your ministry name could be just a simple one tied to a practical concept like Love, Prayer etc. as long as you get your point across.

Sample Names

POTTER'S HOUSE

TEENZ' NATION

JESUSTRIBE

MODULE SIX

ENGAGING PARENTS

Parents are the greatest influence on their children's faith, the involvement of parents in the lives of their children is critical to their spiritual growth.

Parents are meant to have the primary role in teaching and disciplining their children. Our job is to support parents in their efforts. Except in some cases, when parents refuse or cannot do their jobs because they are unbelievers, then the church, by default, takes the primary role.

That is supposed to be the exception rather than the rule. Children and Teens Church will be more effective in engaging and disciplining young people in the context of families when possible.



Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NIV)

If you have been supporting parents in building their children's

spiritual developments, you can still take a step further in building a partnership with the parents;

How to build partnership with Parents

1. Define roles and expectations:

When partnering with parents to achieve a common goal in the lives of the children, roles need to be clarified and expectations need to be well articulated.

❖ Parents' roles and expectations could include:

Parents own the primary responsibility of actively nourishing the faith of their children. These roles are to take the lead in building their children's spiritual growth. These roles come with some expectations. Here are some simple faith- building activities parents can use;

- ***Read the Bible with their children***

When parents create habits of reading the Bible with their children daily or during family devotions, they have already paved the way for more spiritual interactions. The Word of God has the power to help children succeed spiritually.

- ***Learn a Memory verse :***

Children & Teenagers have the capacity to store up God's Word in their hearts. Memorize one scripture per week together as a family. This will help to lay a solid foundation for further interactions with the Bible

- ***Talk with their Children***

Parents need to be with their children daily—talking, listening, and applying Bible truths to the children's lives and theirs. Talk to the children about God and how it matters to their lives.

- ***Parents learn alongside their Children***

There is more balance when parents are involved in the learning experiences their children are having in the church. Visit the Children Church occasionally, you can offer to serve and use the take-home elements to reinforce during the week. Do the

activities together. Talk through the recommended discussion questions.

- ***Modeling their faith***

The real deal is when children see their parents living out what they heard on Sunday. Beyond what children are told to do, they never fail to imitate who their parents are.

- ***Pray***

Parents should pray for and with their children and also teach them how to pray. Prayer will help deepen their relationship with God and help sustain their spiritual walk.

- ❖ **Children Church roles and expectations could include;**

The role of the Children Church is to support the parents in their efforts of building the spiritual growth of their children. Here are some expectations on the part of the Children Church as we work hand-in-hand with the parents for the spiritual development of their children;

- ***Secured environment***

Providing a safe, welcoming, structured, age-appropriate environment for the Children & Teenagers.

- ***Curriculum and Bible Lesson Plans***

Children & Teenagers ought to be taught with well-prepared & biblically sound Bible lessons that are presented in an age-appropriate manner with well-designed class structure that caters to the needs of all the children & teenagers.

- ***A take-home project or assignment***

Children could leave Children Church with elements of the Bible lessons such as projects, visuals or memory verse or songs as reminders to help them focus on what they learned. This assures parents that their children are learning about Christ in a new way and they can use the materials to reinforce the lesson during the week.

- ***Feedbacks***

Provide parents with reports of positive progresses their children are making. This will encourage the parents and the children as

well. It is an attempt to involve the parents in the significant efforts their children are making and encourage them to nurture it back at home. Speak directly to the parents when any issue arises with their children and seek solutions that properly weigh the needs of the larger class and the specific child.

- **Prayer**

Pray for them that their family will be grounded in Christ, to have stronger family ties, to have Salvation experience and tangible growth in their faith. Parents may never know or appreciate that you pray for them, but God does and it matters to Him!

2. Communication

Communication is one of the key factors in partnering with parents. Beyond doing the talking alone, open room for real dialogue, where parents can express their challenges in raising their children and expectations from you. Also provide parents with information outlining your goals and core values, procedures and expectations, behavioral guidelines, contact details etc.

For communication to be effective, it needs the personal touch. Put calls across to parents of your students or visit them. When you are talking, ask them the spiritual growth, changes, decisions or progresses they would like to see in their children. To sit with parents and hear first-hand how best to support them is a great idea!

Parents will not only be aware of what is happening in Children Church, but will also be connected as a part of the experiences their children are having in Church.

Ways of communication

- Through emails
- Periodical newsletters
- Take home contents
- Phone calls
- Visits
- Social media such as Whatsapp groups etc.

- Special meetings or programs

3. Equip Parents

We need to re-educate parents about their roles as their children's primary 'faith-shapers'. Create opportunities where parents can be equipped on how to connect with their children. Most parents would want to dialogue with their children about faith, but they don't know what to talk about. Train them on different approaches on how to tackle difficult issues.

Offer recommended resources to parents to help them acquire more knowledge and skills on how to relate with their children, which could also help them grow in their Christian walk with God. For example; books, devotionals, music, movies, Children & Teenagers learning apps, websites etc.

Provide faith-building connections between the Children Church and Parents such as;

- Prayer meetings
- Bible study Groups
- Mentoring programs
- Service projects
- Outreaches etc.

You must also create opportunities for parents to connect with themselves and the Children Church to discuss solutions to the issues they face and offer strategies to help them transform their family for the better.

Issues like;

- i. Their greatest struggles and fear as parents
- ii. How do they expect the Children Church to support them?
- iii. What could the Children Church do better? etc.

4. Welcome parents to service

An unannounced visit of parents when a teacher is teaching could affect his or her composure during class, however, a friendly and welcoming attitude on the part of the Children Church demonstrates the willingness to serve the entire family.

Extend to parents open invitations to sit in and observe the classroom occasionally. When you invite parents into your classrooms, have them do something significant, let them learn alongside their children. You can also encourage parents to volunteer to join the team.

5. Create opportunities for children in the main service

Create a culture of weaving the children into the fabric of the Church. Find a way to include children in the main worship services, it makes the children a part of the church community and when you do include them, give them opportunities to participate by carving out a role for them in the service. For example, children could read the Scripture for the service, recite memory verses, lead a song or you show a video of ministry happenings, it helps plug parents and children together.

Involving children & teens also shows how important this ministry is to the church as a whole. It ultimately creates a direct connection with families in the church.

6. Pray for them

One of the greatest ways to show to parents that you are working with them as a team is to pray for them. This shows that you care for the families and is a great way to build long-term relationships with them.

MODULE SEVEN

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

One of the greatest privileges and responsibilities of the Church and parents is ministering to children. The Good news of Jesus should be central to everything we do at Church, whether it is through Children Church lessons or discipleship—our greatest priority is teaching the gospel. Responding to Christ's work in repentance and faith is how children begin and mature in the Christian life.

Sharing the gospel with children, however, is not simply presenting activities in your lessons and asking for a show of hands at the end of the class. Parents and ministers must not confuse the gospel with a call to moral obedience alone.



What is the Gospel?

The Gospel is the good news of God's Kingdom. God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. It means God sent His son, Jesus to take the punishment of our sins so that we can be reconciled back to Him.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”. John 3:16 (KJV)

Words & Phrases to avoid when sharing the Gospel with Children

When talking to children about putting their faith in Jesus, it is important to remember that they understand abstract concepts differently from adults, hence the need to pay attention to how it is being presented.

Here are some phrases you need to shy away from when presenting a salvation message to children;

- "Raise your hand if you want to go to heaven".
- "Invite Jesus into your heart".
- "Once you believe in Jesus, you will feel different and happy all the time."
- "Everything will be better once you give your life to Jesus".
- "Pray the sinner's prayer".
- "You need to be baptized".

Many times, parents and ministers piece together some ideas and end up making statements that sound good to make Children happy. If you are not sure of something, do not say it.

No doubt some of those phrases have led to genuine conversion, however, we must not confuse outward demonstration to genuine repentance and faith.

What to say when sharing the Gospel with Children

To clearly explain the meaning of believing in and following Jesus, you need to use your words with care and understanding.

Here is 6-Phrases Approach to sharing The Gospel with Children;

- God loves you and wants to have a relationship with you.
- But we all sinned (because of what Adam did) and the punishment for sin is death (separation from God).
- Jesus took your punishment for you by dying on the cross.
- Because Jesus died for you, your sins can be forgiven and you can receive the opportunity to have a relationship with God.
- You need to accept the free gift of God by believing in your

hearts that Jesus died for you and that you can now have a relationship with God.

- You can do this by praying and telling God you believe and you want His forgiveness.

Principles of sharing the Gospel to Children

i. Building trust

This is super important. How can you expect a child to say, "Yes!" to Jesus if they have not met a Christian they trust? The commitment and love you show each Child will allow you the opportunity to invite them into a relationship with Jesus.

ii. Be prepared

Before you walk into a Children's Church classroom or talk to your children about the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, you would do well to figure out exactly how you would explain the message of salvation. Be gentle with the words you use to share the gospel and be careful about the pictures you paint in their imaginative minds.

Get ready for their questions with the same care and time that you would take to get ready for a grown-up conversation about your faith. Study the gospel story well, so that you understand what happened when and why.

iii. Connect it to the Scripture

Do not force a salvation message with a Bible story where it does not make sense. The key here is to view the passage through the eyes of a child, how they think, and what they can grasp per time. Using truth from the Bible as you share the gospel will reinforce to children that these big ideas are God's message in the Bible that He shares with us.

iv. Make it simple

When you share the gospel, make it simple. Use vocabulary your young children will understand. Think about the idea of child-like faith, children do not need to have a full understanding of the

theology behind salvation.

For example; instead of saying, "Jesus paid our debt with His blood", say, "Jesus died on the cross so our sins could be taken away". Consider combining two or more learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic etc.) in your presentation to hit multiple senses at the same time. When you do this, the chance of children staying engaged increases. The clearer your presentation of the story of Jesus, the better children will understand and take steps towards putting their faith in Jesus.

v. Give them an action step

Do not assume the first positive response means they got all the truth they need to know. Altar calls create an emotional moment where many children respond because they are swept up in all the feel of the message. I am sure that many people over the years have made authentic decisions for faith in this sort of atmosphere, but many times children make these decisions because they see their friends going up to the front, they want to be part of the action, or they want to make an adult happy. Instead, give them clear ways they can respond to the Salvation message.

*Talk with a small group leader or parent.

*Stay afterwards and talk with an adult.

*Talk to your mom or dad or a trusted adult when you get home

Giving children a chance to talk with an adult will give them a guide to help them work through their questions. The adult or parent should be able to help them discern the authenticity of the decision and connect the child to the next steps they should take.

vi. Get the family involved

If the child is from a family where someone is a follower of Christ, invite them into the process. The Bible is very clear in emphasizing that parents—particularly fathers—are to bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" Ephesians 6:4.

Support parents by giving them the opportunity to have this conversation and experience this important moment in their children's lives. If they seem like they are not equipped to handle this situation, by all means step into the conversation and help them.

vii. Praying

One of the secrets to effective evangelism is prayer. Unless God works in the hearts and lives of children & teenagers, no spiritual work can be done. Pray for them continually and that you will be able to share the message of salvation with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Tools for sharing the Gospel with Children

• **The Wordless Book**

The wordless book has been around for a long time. Invented by the great preacher Charles Spurgeon in 1866, it's an oldie but a good one—probably because it is simple and memorable!

Sharing the message of salvation through colours. The most common version is a little “book” made from construction paper squares and staples, but you can use the colours as beads on a bracelet, make key-chains etc.

Here are the colors and what they stand for:

• **Yellow (or gold)—It depicts Heaven (The abode of God)**

It represents;

*God as your creator

*God loves you

*Heaven

Bible verse;

Revelation 21:21

To explain;

God made you and He also made heaven, which is a wonderful place.

*There is no sickness, no pain and no hunger there

*Everyone is perfectly happy in heaven

The most wonderful thing about heaven is that it is God's home. God loves you very much and wants you to be with him. There is something that prevents you from being with Him. Sin!

Suggested Link;

"But there is one thing that can never be in heaven. That is sin".

- **Black— It depicts the sinful state of mankind**

It represents;

*Darkness that sin brought into the world

*Sin separated us from God

Bible verse;

Romans 5:12

To explain;

Sin is something that prevents us from being with God. We are born with a 'want to do bad things' nature. All of us have sinned and our hearts are not clean. On our own, we cannot make our hearts clean, but God loves us so much that he provides a way for our hearts to be made clean.

Suggested Link;

"But God has a wonderful plan so you and I do not have to be punished for our sins".

- **Red— It depicts The blood of Jesus**

It represents;

*Jesus took your punishment

*God's provision for you to be reunited to Him through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

Bible verses;

1 John 1:7b, Ephesians 1:7 & Hebrews 9:22

To explain;

God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus to take the punishment of our sins. Instead of us being punished, he took our place. He died on the cross so that he might reconcile us back to God.

Suggested Links;

"And now because of what the Lord Jesus did for you, your sins are forgiven".

- **White— It depicts Cleansing**

It represents;

*Invitation (to turn from sin and self-effort)

*Assurance of salvation (Jesus washes us clean)

Bible verse

John 1:12 & 2 Corinthians 5:21

To explain;

The amazing thing is that your heart can now be made clean, but before your heart can be made clean, you need to sincerely;

*Let God know that you want to have a relationship with Him.

*Admit that you have sinned and ask God to forgive you

*Accept the free gift of God by believing that Jesus died on the cross to be punished instead of you, and

*Tell Him to come into your heart and be your friend.

Now give them assurance by telling them they are children & friends of God now and that Jesus will always be with them.

Suggested Links;

"When you become God's children, He wants you to get to know Him better".

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

- **Green— It depicts Growing in your relationship with God.**

It represents;

- *Growing in Christ
- *Spiritual disciples help us to grow
- Pray
- Read and obey the Bible
- Tell others about God's love
- Fellowship with other believers

Bible verse;

2 Peter 3:18

To explain;

God's plan is that you should grow in your relationship with Him. Just like a plant needs different things to grow, you also need help to grow as children of God. To grow, you need to spend time talking to God in prayer, be with other believers, and reading God's Word. (Take time to explain what each of these areas look like)

Suggested Links;

Books or activities that can aid spiritual growth.

The Wordless Book Lyrics

My heart was dark with sin
Until the Saviour came in.
His precious blood I know
has washed me white as snow
And in God's word I'm told

I'll walk the street of Gold.
To Grow in Christ every day
I read my Bible and pray.



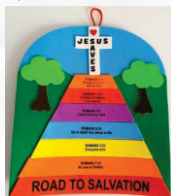
HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

Hoooooh, listen now to the story of God's love
Hoooooh, this is how to live in Jesus' love.
A new life God gave to me, life abundant and free.

He wants this new life to grow
The Bible tells me so.
Learning and trusting and praying, witnessing & obeying 2x
I'll grow in knowledge until I see His face

- **The Roman Road**

The Romans Road to Salvation is a selection of Bible verses taken from the book of Romans that present the plan of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. You can memorize these verses and or mark them in your Bible and use them when sharing your faith with your children.



It explains why we need salvation, how God provided salvation, how we can receive salvation, and the results of salvation.

*Romans 3:23- The Roman Road begins with acknowledging our human sinfulness. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*.

*Romans 6:23- The Romans Road then explains the consequences of sin. This refers to spiritual death and separation from God for eternity. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"*. The children will learn that God has given us the victory over death and he gives us life.

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

Romans 5:8- Next, The Romans Road teaches how God has provided salvation. *“But God shows his love for us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us”*. The Children will learn how God provided the answer to the world's biggest problem.

*Romans 10:9- The Romans Road then teaches how we can receive salvation. *“Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”*. The children will learn the importance of hearing God's word and responding to faith.

Romans 5:1- Finally, The Romans Road shares the results of salvation. *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”*. The result is a relationship with God, which also includes peace and security Romans 8:1 & Romans 8: 38-39.

- **EvangeCube**

EvangeCube is a seven-picture cube that simply and clearly unfolds the gospel of Jesus Christ. The cube begins showing the separation of man from God and progressively opens to reveal Christ's death on the cross, open tomb, Christ's resurrection, heaven and hell, and followers of Christ.

It is a great tool for sharing the gospel of Christ with children. It is a fun, interactive cube that flips and folds to reveal a clear gospel message. It's a fun, colorful, entertaining way for



children to explore, interact and think about the gospel. EvangeCube was developed by E3 Resources, you can order online from u-buy and Amazon. Watch a presentation video of EvangeCube at <https://youtu.be/zETUh50u8Vs>

• **Science Experiment**

Illustrate the cleansing power of Jesus with this simple science experiment.

*Fill a water jug with clean water – this water represents us.

*Add a few drops of food coloring into the water – this represents sin in our lives.

*Slowly pour liquid bleach into the water jug; the water should become clear again – In the same way that bleach cleans the stained water, when we accept Jesus into our lives, Jesus has the power to remove the stains from our hearts and make our hearts clean!

• **Building Blocks**

Building blocks is a classic toy that many children enjoy. You can have a fun time playing with them together with your children. For your gospel presentation, simply assemble various objects using Building Blocks and share the gospel message using the same points as the Wordless Book:

- Use yellow blocks to make a house – this represents heaven.
- Use black blocks to make a heart – this represents sin.
- Use red blocks to make a cross – this represents the blood of Jesus.
- Use white blocks to make a heart – this represents a clean heart.

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

- Use green blocks to make a tree – this represents growth.

Review and Follow-up

- Encourage children to tell you in their own words what they understand and believe. Either ask them to repeat a prayer after you or help the children know what to say in their prayer. After the prayer, read Romans 10:13 and remind them that this verse is a promise. Jesus will be their Savior forever.
- Even if your child is not artistic, create a scrapbook page with your children or journal for your teenagers. Have them write and draw their thoughts and feelings about their salvation. Help them come up with their own ideas and give them some Bible references that might be useful. This page can be used later in their life to remind them that they understood exactly what it means to be saved.



ADVANCE

MODULE ONE

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Spiritual growth in children & teenagers is the ability to use the Word of God they know until they start exhibiting Christian virtues and being able to discern the difference between right and wrong.

In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Peter 1:5-8 (KJV)

As children and teens ministers, our responsibility is to help translate God's Word which we are teaching them into practical living. God's Word is not just theory, but an experience that should be evident in how they live. And as they do this on a daily basis, they begin to exhibit Christian virtues and are able to differentiate evil from good because this is what they do in their everyday life.

Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. Hebrews 5:14

There is a saying that goes thus: 'the way to get the Word of God from our heads into our hearts is through our hands'. The lives of young ones need to reflect the Bible truth they are

learning by daily doing or practicing in their real life situations.

What to watch out for when helping Children & Teenagers to grow

- Be patient: you need to give room for growth and expect some ups & downs
- Have a positive disposition towards them: do not mount undue pressure by expecting them to behave like little adults, they are not.
- Do not expect to be able to measure their spiritual growth with any degree of accuracy. This is the job of the Holy Spirit.
- The Bible (God's Word) is the only book that imparts spiritual growth in any person. So, do not depend on any other book to turn your young people into spiritual giants.

Qualities of spiritual growth in Children & Teenagers

1. It must be age appropriate

Certain Christian virtues are expected at different phases of life.

For younger Children;

- Goodness by showing concern for others
- Patience by learning to take turn
- Love by sharing with friends
- Kindness etc.

For older Children & Teenagers

- Knowledge of the Bible
- Service
- Self-control etc.

2. It must be progressive

Spiritual growth is a process and happens in phases. A child or teen will start as 'babe' in his or her faith by making little efforts per time to exhibit Christian virtues, which will grow gradually and later become more evident in every area of his or her life

And God has made provision for everything they need to grow, just as a healthy baby is born with all the parts it needs to grow,

just as a healthy baby is born with all the parts it needs to grow and develop normally, so we are born spiritually with all we need to grow in Christ.

3. It must be experimental

The Word of God is not theory, children & teenagers need to experiment with God's Word to be able to believe it. They want to try it out, apply it to their everyday lives and experience its truthfulness.

Spiritual growth is being forged through personal experience with God's word while making decisions to please God by pleasing him.

4. It must be practical

Beyond good behaviours, consistent attendance or reciting memory verse, children & teenagers have the capacity to put the Bible truth they are learning into practice. There must be practical expressions of their inward realities. It starts when they make faith commitment to God, then grow by adding other Christian virtues to their faith.

5. It is attainable

Spiritual growth is achievable in children & teenagers, though it will take lots of patience, time and energy. It may look lofty at the beginning, but get easier as they make little effort each day in real life situations.

Relationships in spiritual growth

Relationships are key to children & teenagers' spiritual growth. A relationship needs to be a safe and healthy one to foster spiritual growth. As ministers who seek to make a difference in the lives of young people, there are some qualities you need to have;

Qualities needed in adults to build safe & healthy relationships with children and teenagers;

- Adults who really care: everybody thrives in a loving environment, one fast way to earn the trust of children & teenagers is to show genuine care for them. They really want to know if someone cares for them.
- Adults who can affirm: positive affirmation helps children & teens to shape their lives and create a reality they wish to have in their minds.
- Adults who can listen: Active listening is a good way to improve your communication with children & teenagers. It helps them know that you are interested in what they have to say by giving your full attention to them when they come to you and you being able to reflect on all that was said to make sure you understand.
- Adults who can play and have fun: play & fun should be included in our activities in Children Church. It offers opportunities for you to connect and bond with young people. They will see you as someone at their level and by that, they will be more open to listen to you and trust you.
- Adults who can offer help in challenging periods: the strength of friendship is proven in tough times. Do not back off a child problem or shy away from the situation, they will feel more courageous if they know you are with them during their troubled times.

- Adults who can pray: spiritual growth cannot happen without prayers. Be given to the ministry of prayer by praying for your children & teens. That is where the most important changes happen.

Developing a plan for Children & Teenagers Spiritual growth

A good plan must have the following components;

- **Relational components**

- i. Visit your children & teens outside church
- ii. Create a safe & friendly environment
- iii. Notice and give attention to newcomers
- iv. Enhance your facility
- v. Involve children and teens in the learning process in Children church and programs
- vi. Pray for & with them always

- **Conceptual components**

- i. Tackle tough topics creatively e.g. sin, dating, drugs, self-image, social media, internet use, parental relationships etc.
- ii. Teach basic principles of Christian faith e.g. salvation, faith, baptism, prayer, sanctification, laying of hands, resurrection, eternal judgment etc.

- **Action components**

- i. Evangelism
- ii. Outreaches
- iii. Camps
- iv. Concerts
- v. Drama and Movies
- vi. Hospital visits etc.

Different level of Spiritual growth in Children & Teenagers

- **Casual Children & Teens:** these category of children & teens are yet to make faith commitment to Christ even though they visit or attend Church regularly
- **Curious children & teens:** these categories might have made commitment to God and may be willing and ready to grow their faith, their curiosity and yearning may be obvious by the questions they ask during Bible lesson moments.
- **Committed children & teens:** these ones are already followers of Christ and are eager to serve, especially helping to lead younger children to Christ.

Activities that can stimulate Spiritual growth in Children & Teenagers

Ages 1–5

i. Lots of display of care and affection.

- Know each Child's name
- Ask what their favorite colour, food, cartoons are
- Let them tell you about their siblings and parents
- Ask them the name of their school and what grade they are etc.

ii. Use the moments of your Bible lessons to lay foundation of faith by telling them the truths about God;

- His love
- He keeps his promises
- He is always with them even when mummy & daddy are not there
- The Bible is the Word of God
- God wants us to obey him etc.

iii. Make prayer part of the activities you do in class, let them understand that prayer is talking with God.

Ages 6–9

i. Build positive beliefs into children's hearts through activities like reading the Bible in class, participating in drama, role-play etc. Children's spiritual development is also dependent on their interaction with others. Part of how people view themselves has to do with how others treat them.

ii. Encourage their questions and curiosities about God and the world. This helps develop a sense of belonging and acceptance.

iii. Separate fact from fiction, because younger children readily create their own fantasy and are full of imaginations. When teaching, let them know that the source of the lesson is from the Bible, gradually they will begin to figure out that Jesus is not some myth or cartoon character, but a real friend they can relate with.

iv. Encourage memory verse learning. Children's ability to recall certain verses has an important place in a child's spiritual development; remembering the bible verses helps their relationships with God, not just the knowledge, but the connection of the scripture with their real lives.

v. Model praying consistently in your classrooms. If children see genuine prayers led by adults and others, it encourages them to reach out to God in prayer, too.

10–12

i. Have creative programs, activities and lessons that will help them understand the gospel.

ii. Ask them open-ended questions that cannot be answered with 'yes' or 'no' or with a static response which will help you understand their growth status. They usually begin with words like

why, how, what, describe, tell me etc. For example; "Tell me why Jesus died on the Cross?" "What does someone have to do to go to heaven?" "Why do you think you are a Christian?"

iii. Create interest in their academic pursuits by having discussions on career choice in a group meeting, one-on-one interaction with the pre-teen, playing an accountability partner etc.

iv. Teach biblical doctrines such as baptism, sanctification, resurrection, communion etc. because they will start to become meaningful to them.

v. Help pre-teens understand and remember verses from God's Word. This is not memory for memory's sake; it's about helping them have an understanding of how God's Word matters to them.

vi. In the moments of your Bible lesson, challenge and encourage personal faith decisions such as salvation.

vii. Pay them visit. They really want to know how much you care. In the process of your visit, you are also engaging the families.

13 & above

i. Create cross-generational mentoring experiences where older people can interact with teenagers.

ii. Incorporate concrete worship experiences into programs and activities for your teens.

iii. Help Teenagers understand and remember verses from God's Word.

iv. Give room for self-expressions, questions and opinions in each meeting time.

v. Ask questions that will help teenagers process information in

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

the Bible and apply it to their lives—whether they answer aloud or silently. These questions help them to think and consider who they are and who they're becoming.

vi. Be a part of their lives by checking on them at home and school

vii. Encourage peer counseling

viii. Let them serve on projects committees

ix. Pray—during your time together and for teenagers throughout the week.

MODULE TWO

DISCIPLESHIP

A disciple is a learner, an apprentice. In today's world, you could call a disciple a student. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. A disciple of Jesus is someone who is learning to be like Jesus in character, in behaviour, in words and in love.

In the scripture, the expectation of God is that parents should be intentional in the way they bring up their children. He commanded them to teach their children God's Words and pass on their faith to the next generation.

It is clearly important to God that parents do it faithfully, because this is one way God uses to fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations! (See Deuteronomy 6:4–9).

Parents have more contact with their children because they spend more time with them than anyone else—much more than their Children Church teachers. That is why parents are the primary disciplers of their children. The Children Church and the community can only support parents in the journey of discipling their children?



“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)

What part does the Church have to play?

i. Being rooted in God's Word

The root system serves to guarantee the existence of the whole tree. Without roots, a tree simply could not even survive.

The Church's role is to support the parents by providing stability for them in God's Word. Parents need to have a deeper understanding of God's word through Bible Studies, Retreats, Seminars etc. and be trained on how to daily engage their children with God's Words.

ii. Prayer

Prayer and dependence on God are keys to discipling children and are some of the ways true life-changes can occur. Prayer is such a big part of the Christian life, it cannot be left out of the disciple-making process.

The Church's role is to equip parents with prayers. Asking God for guidance and wisdom for them on their children's spiritual development until they are fully matured and their lives are in total obedience to God.

iii. Accountability

Parents cannot do discipleship of their children alone. Which is why they need the Church to put up a follow-up system in place to check the progress they are making and offer possible solutions to whatever challenges they might be going through.

Accountability is important for parents, especially for those who aim to live as Christ did and be an example to their children. They will sometimes need accountability in cases where they get distracted or overwhelmed in the process.

iv. A transformed lifestyle

The gospel becomes real to children & teenagers when it is being revealed through the way their parents live because discipleship flows from a transformed life. One of the key components to discipling children & teenagers is practicing what you preach.

Parents need to be equipped on how to model Christ as they live their everyday lives to their children. Not just preaching or talking theories, but living as an example of a true believer which their children can emulate.

The truth of the matter is that what we do in the Church on Sunday, though critically important, is not what proves our faith, our character is shaped as we go through life every day.

v. Connection

The relationship between the family and the church is very important. God designed the church and the family as complementary institutions—designed to function together and support one another. The church needs to build relationships to create a place where parents are being affirmed, equipped, and encouraged to fulfill their God-given privilege and responsibility of bringing up their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord.

vi. Community

No matter how much time and energy parents put into discipling their children, they will need other believers helping them along the way to grow their faith.

The Church is a community of believers who worship and serve together based on the teachings of God's Word. Another way to support parents in discipling their children is for parents to grant access to other believing and trusting adults to directly connect and relate with their children.

Types of Discipleship

❖ **Group Discipleship**

Group Discipleship is a small group of children & teens more than one, but not too large mentored by a believing adult, who is committed to getting real about life and helping them grow up in their love for God.

This form of discipleship is normally developed through careful thought and planning. It exists within a set of framework, and normally has a leader who is responsible for the study and overall growth of the group's members.

They meet together regularly to study God's Word and live life together by learning from one another, having fun and playing together, eating with one another, serving one another, and carrying one another's burdens.

Four things you need to do to have a great Group discipleship

- **Love them**

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to guide children & teens into a deeper relationship with Jesus. So, do not force them to perform in any certain way, rather model it by loving and accepting them.

A disciple-maker of children & teenagers needs to embrace them for who they are and not pressure everyone to be on the same level in knowledge or spiritual maturity.

- **Engage them**

Children & Teenagers need to be actively engaged in order to have maximum impact. Once you have identified and selected children & teens that will be in your small group and get it running, you may also want to engage them with a certain theme or purpose. Are you going over a book of the Bible? Are you dedicating an amount of time each meeting to praying for each other? Decide on where you'll meet, when, and what you'll be

doing.

Discipleship cannot be attained in a day, it takes time and individual attention by bringing children into a personal relationship with Jesus and staying with them until their whole lives are in obedience to Christ Jesus.

- **Pray with them**

It is not up to you to save children & teenagers, you are discipling, that is the role of the Holy Spirit. As we faithfully love and engage them, we must pray for the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and transform them by the power of the gospel.

- **Evaluate**

Is there anything you could have done differently? Are there better approaches? Are there any members in your group that you want to spend extra time figuring out how to serve them best? After each group meeting, evaluate how you personally lead and how the time with your group went so as to determine the progress and more things to improve on.

❖ **One-on-One Discipleship**

One-on-One Discipleship is teaching biblical truth in the context of caring relationships to help children & teenagers grow their faith in God.

This type of discipleship could happen spontaneously as we live our daily lives. For example, when we make friends in the church and share life with them, there are situations that will naturally present opportunities for discipleship. Either the Church assigns you to a particular child, or the child or teenager finds his or her way to you or you are particularly drawn to such.

This is normally a mutual form of discipleship, where both participants disciple one another—praying together, reading

Scripture together, and walking side by side as they bear each other's burdens.

Six things you need to do to have a great One-on-One discipleship

- **Be a Good Listener**

Asking questions is an awesome start, but don't ask a question with the intention to share your answer! Ask those great, heart questions and then LISTEN. Listen well. Let them share. Active listening and probing with understanding energize children & teenagers and encourage them to build a relationship with you.

Then let your next question be guided by what you heard them say. Listening well allows you not just to think about what you want to say, but opens the door to lean into where their heart is.

- **Be Genuine**

It is so important to share our real lives with those we are discipling. This is being real about what you are going through, sharing your life and your heart with them. If you want children & teenagers to see you as their friends, you need to be open to a friendship that reciprocates.

This is so important as you model what following Jesus looks like and help them to do the same. As you are genuine, you set the stage for them to be too.

- **Trust**

For any relationship to flourish, trust is foundational. Children & teenagers thrive in any potential one-on-one relationships because overtime they have learnt to confide in you and feel secure with whatever they tell you without fear of being judged or exposed, hence, discipleship is being made easy.

They want to be around you, listen to you, and try out things you are teaching them because they have tested and proven you to be trustworthy.

- **Include them in your life**

This one is huge and requires time and patience. It is also important to let those we are discipling into our world and into our homes. Let them do life with you and see what it looks like for you to follow Jesus.

As you live life together, they get a genuine view of life with Christ, see if what you say matches with how you really live, and you also grow to have a deeper, trusting friendship with one another.

- **Share God's word and pray together always**

A major key to discipleship is getting into God's Word together. Learn from one another and share truths about God's character and goodness. The emphasis should be on the application of the Bible truth into their lives.

It is also important you spend time praying together as well. Pray over what you have discussed. Ask what other areas of their lives needs to be prayed about and share in each other's lives in this way.

- **Accountability**

Accountability in discipleship helps us as Christians to stay on track with our personal and spiritual life by confiding in other Christians for encouragement and direction. The Church leadership could also create accountability by holding leaders responsible and making sure the discipleship process is being followed. It is expected of a disciple-maker to be transparent as much as possible.

This is a propeller that encourages children & teenagers to be honest about their lives and be able to keep up when they are being pulled into an intentional one-to-one relationship.

How to plan Discipleship Program

i. Ascertain the Purpose

Set both personal and collective goals. What does the disciple want to grow in or receive? What does the disciple-maker want to accomplish? These things should be clearly stated and worked towards.

ii. Get your students

It is advised to make your discipleship gender-based as the case may be, especially, in a one-on-one discipleship. Prayerfully select one, two, or more children to meet with, communicate with their parents or guardians and schedule special meetings over a period of time. Just like our Jesus chose twelve men to be His disciples.

For group discipleship, it could be the children you are teaching in church or involved with as a group.

iii. Set Time

Look into both parties' calendars and fix achievable time plans and work hard to meet up. There must be consistent meetings and communication. At times it may be impossible to meet based on certain circumstances. If this cannot be attained, there should be as much virtual communication as possible. Whether this is through email, messaging, writing letters, or phone calls, these efforts should be made.

iv. Decide the Place

Select different safe and conducive places where you will be comfortable and can talk freely, like a living room, restaurant etc. It is advised that you should not be limited to the church environment alone. Open up your life and live your everyday life for them to see so that the gospel can be more real to them. If you like, vary the setting each week.

v. Draw activities Plan

Infuse varieties into each meeting time. You could have snacks, play some games, discuss the day's topic, pray with them etc. Just like our Lord Jesus used different methods for his disciples, he taught them, he fed them, he rebuked, prayed with, and trained them.

vi. Teach Biblically- rich and practical topics

Draw a training program that contains topics that will aid spiritual growth to use with your children & teens and put emphasis on application, make it practical. You could have topics varying from salvation, prayer, service, worship, speaking in tongues, discipleship, eternal life, etc (See 1Timothy 4:12).

When a child's spiritual developmental process includes rich-biblical contents and adequate supply of solutions to everyday life issues, we can be reasonably assured that we have done our part to build a lifelong disciple of Jesus Christ.

MODULE THREE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Spiritual disciplines are practices that by design can lead to life transformation. They are like training exercises or workouts for your faith and their purpose is to aid spiritual growth and deepen our relationship with God.

“Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly.

8 “Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”

1 Timothy 4:7-8 (KJV)



What is Discipline for Children & Teenagers?

Discipline is the practice of training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behaviour in children & teenagers through instructions. It is beyond punishment or coercion, it is more about encouraging and motivating them to learn certain principles.

Why are Spiritual Disciplines necessary?

- **Jesus modeled it**

Throughout the Gospel, we see Jesus as a perfect example of someone who practiced spiritual discipline. Hence, if Jesus thought them to be critical to his relationship with God, then that

makes them more important for every child or teen to practice in his or her spiritual journey.

- **Produce active relationship with God**

Spiritual disciplines help to stay connected to God, hence bear spiritual fruits. When spiritual disciplines are neglected, very little spiritual fruit will be produced. The daily practices can help children & teenagers to overcome bad habits, and replace them with good habits.

Spiritual Disciplines

These are some spiritual disciplines among others that Children & Teenagers can start to practice;

1. The Bible

We need children & teenagers to believe the Bible is the Word of God. And the best way to help children & teenagers to avoid error in the understanding of spiritual disciplines is to help them stick with clear scriptural mandates given to all Christians in the Bible.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)

Components of the Bible

- **Reading:** Parents & Ministers should help children to love the Bible, even as early as one year old. Encourage them to interact, love and get familiar with the Bible. It should be a regular devotional reading.
- **Studying:** This is central to the process of renewing the mind of children & teenagers in such a way that they can respond appropriately to the truths of God's Word. Encourage them to take a step further from just reading to carefully giving attention to God's word so they can get more understanding

of the Scripture.

Parents should teach their children & teenagers how to study God's Words by reading with them and spending time discussing what you have read. Either in an in-depth study of a verse per day, or a book for a month or using a study plan or devotionals, there is a need to create a routine on how to study the Bible every day.

- **Memorizing:** Another way children & teenagers can incorporate Scripture into their spiritual disciplines is by committing key passages to memory. These could be passages that are particularly meaningful or that meet some specific need at the time. When they internalize Scripture, the Holy Spirit finds ways to make it come alive in their spirits.
- **Meditating:** To meditate on the Word is to take the time to ponder a verse or a passage from Scripture so that its truth can sink deeply into our being. We must make a crucial distinction here for children & teenagers because meditation can be misunderstood. Christian meditation focuses on filling the mind with God's Word not empty minds.

2. Prayer

It is important to let children understand that prayer is talking with God, just like they talk with their parents.

The spiritual discipline of prayer is of great importance which cannot be overemphasized. One of the best ways parents can help their children understand the importance of prayer is to ask them to pray about issues that concern them, your family and friends. This will help children understand that prayer is one of the most wonderful ways through which God enables us to take part in caring for others.

As ministers, while supporting parents in the journey of their children's spiritual development, model praying in children's church and other activities. Let them understand that prayer is

personal communion and dialogue with the living God. It must not be seen as a burden, rather a privilege to be with God. Engraft prayers into your Sunday service and encourage them to lead the class or pray for a specific need.

Components of Prayer

- **Thanksgiving:** God wants us to learn to be thankful for all the things He has given and done for us. It is healthy for children & teenagers' spiritual growth to be reminded that everything we have is a gift from Him. Without gratitude, we become arrogant and self-centered.
- **Confession:** Encourage children & teenagers to be open about what they are finding challenging to do in obeying God, let them know that it sets them free from the burden of sin and allow them draw closer to God.
- **Requests:** It offers praises to God, extol his power and nature and asking God for a need or more.
- **Intercession:** This is when we ask God to do something or meet a need on behalf of others.
- **Supplication:** Supplication is a form of prayer in which someone makes a humble petition or an entreaty to God. It is a plea for personal help or need.
- **Quietness and listening to what God has to say back:** Listening to God is an aspect of prayer that allows you understand what his will is in any given circumstance.

3. Worship

The discipline of worship expands children & teenagers' concept of who God is and what he has done. Worship is focusing on and

connecting with God. When children & teenagers learn to worship God, they will be fully occupied with the attributes of God—the majesty, beauty, and goodness of his person, powers, and perfections.

Parents could start with gratitude, perhaps by making a list of all you and your children have to be thankful for. Speak continuously of His sovereignty, offer praise and reverence to His name, all these are connected to joyful confidence of intimate communion with Him.

Young people are into hero-worship. Hence, special attention must be given to worship in our Sunday services, children & teens ministers need to teach and model to them that God is the only one who deserves our worship and we must be careful not to put anything else above him in our lives.

Different components of Worship

- Acknowledging who God is
- Total surrender to Him
- Gratitude
- Music
- Gladness of heart
- A lifestyle of continuous praise

4. Fasting

This spiritual discipline is always seen as a difficult one since it requires children & teenagers denying themselves physical nourishment i.e. food and water. Fasting is not about food and water alone, it is an attempt to self-deny oneself of things you enjoy just to focus more on God, such things could be Internet, social media, games, TV etc.

Parents could practice fasting with their children by choosing something to give up daily or weekly in the family so as to draw their hearts closer to God.

As ministers, make it simple and clear to children & teenagers

that it is not about how much or how little they give up, but their willingness to alter something in their lives in an effort to grow their faith.

Components of Fasting

- Self-denial
- Self-Control
- Prayers
- Focused mind on God
- Trust in God
- Studying God's Word

5. Service

Serving is an incredible way to grow in faith. Any time we put others before ourselves, we give God glory and give him room to do his work. The discipline of service does not call attention to itself but concentrates instead on the needs and concerns of others.

As parents, model service to your children by helping others, serving together in church. Naturally, children & teenagers love to be at the center of attraction, but when they start to serve others, their focus and attention will be shifted to other people, and by doing that, they will derive joy and happiness.

As ministers, opening the eyes of children & teenagers to the needs of others is the first step in figuring out how God would have them serve the world around them. Give them the opportunities to serve others and let them know that there are great rewards for any service offered to God and people.

Components of Service

- Sensitivity to others' needs
- Genuine concern for others
- Service can happen wherever they are
- It does not have to be big to be acceptable by God.

Fellowship

God never called Christians to live out their spiritual journey alone. We are all part of the body of Christ and designed to function together. Encourage children & teenagers to fellowship with others, not only will they find help in time of need, but they will also be able to help others in their time of need.

Components of Fellowship

- We carve out time in our days and weeks to meet together.
- We break bread together.
- We speak encouragement over one another
- Listen and carry burdens alongside one another.
- We serve together.

Journaling

Keeping a diary expands your understanding of the unique process of spiritual formation through which God is taking you through. It is a discipline that encourages believers to record perspectives they received from Scripture, and serves as another form of prayer. It enhances personal reflection of God's Word. Parents and ministers need to ensure this discipline is instilled into children at their tender age so they can internalize it early.

Components of Journaling

- Prayer
- Study
- Meditation
- Reflection
- Writing

How to help Children & Teenagers to practice Spiritual discipline

i. Practice with them

We are all wired differently, some have a stronger inner sense of compliance and grit, while some need loads of motivation to get

anything done. Practice these spiritual disciplines by showing them to make it real and to regulate the differences in each child or teen. Give a call for fasting, create a prayer chain among them, establish a concrete worship experience in the service etc.

ii. Encourage parents to practice with their children

It may take children & teenagers some time to fully understand the value of God's special grace available to them but when parents are involved in teaching their children how to develop good spiritual practices now, it will set them up for beautiful growth in the years to come. Encourage parents to be intentional about daily practice of the spiritual disciplines by making it simple as much as they can.

iii. Challenge them

Challenge each child & teen to choose one discipline to focus on each week or month. Parents should find ways to put these practices in place into their family life by challenging each other to choose one discipline to focus on per time until it becomes easy.

iv. Guide & Correct with love

Expect some ups and downs, the term spiritual discipline could induce a weight of responsibility on children & teenagers, and could send a sense of failure any time they could not meet up. Therefore, give room for lapses and disappointments. Prayerfully guide and correct them with love and encourage them to give themselves another chance.

v. Celebrate Milestones

Ensure to follow up adequately with each effort they are making to be spiritually disciplined. Do not let them tire out or burn out because of lack of appreciation. Acknowledge what each child or teen is doing and celebrate them. This is important to their psyche, it will motivate them to do more.

MODULE FOUR

USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CHILDREN & TEENS CHURCH

We live in a time when digital tools have fundamentally transformed the world, and the reality of children & teenagers' lives. The world is more connected and enlightened than ever before. For example, during a time of isolation and social distancing, the world relied on technology to learn, live, and stay connected.

Children's Church can leverage technology to make the gospel available, increase impact and to enhance our connection with children & teenagers in a productive way.



There is an increasing array of tools and digital resources available more than ever before. Explore what works for you and your audience.

When using technology in Children & Teens Church

- **It must be safe**

Whether we like it or not, technology has irresistibly become a critical part of our modern world. It is unappealing to many children & teens in these times, if adults try to send the message that technology is something to fear. Instead, we should focus on teaching with safe & engaging tools and encourage parents to help and guide their children on how to build safe habits in their use of technology.

- **It must be age appropriate**

Technology when used appropriately can be a tool for learning and increase learning opportunities for children & teenagers. The major concern is the balance between technological learning and excessive or inappropriate usage. Each age-group must be put into consideration when choosing what type of tools and resources to use and decide the amount of time. Ministers need to know that over-reliance on technology and overly advanced technology can remove life out of the Bible lesson experiences children ought to have.

- **Manage your class well**

As we incorporate technology into our lessons, it is important to remember that our use of technology needs to be balanced. We must be careful to ensure that technology does not become the lesson or distract the children or teens from the spiritual truth of the lesson. Set expectations about the use of technology in the classroom based on principles. One key principle might be 'When we use technology in class, it is to help us learn about God in an amazing way and not distract us or to entertain ourselves!'

- **Educate yourself**

Don't let your own fear or lack of understanding about technology get in the way of letting the children & teenagers use it in appropriate ways. You need to first learn how to navigate different apps and resources before you can use them to compliment your lessons. You can get on the internet and start learning; there are websites that teach how to be internet-wise and give advice on how to avoid dangerous sites.

- **It must be engaging**

The more children & teenagers are involved in the learning process, the greater the effectiveness of using technology. Throughout the lesson, engage them by letting the class look up scriptures, watch the prepared videos, discuss the PowerPoints, answer questions etc.

Digital Contents and its formats

Digital contents simply means having your messages in a format that is accessible digitally.

❖ **3 Broad formats of Digital Content**

- **Text:** it comprises word that can be typed plainly or animated and designed to be read
- **Images:** this can be still pictures, art work or motion pictures (videos)
- **Audio:** contents are auditory only to be listened to e.g. speech, songs etc.

❖ **How to create digital contents for your Lessons**

i. Text: text can be combined with images and voice to create an impactful and engaging lesson for children & teenagers. For example, you can record voice over a PowerPoint slide to make it more personal and dynamic.

ii. Images: You can create your own images or browse the internet. There are free or paid access images, graphics, and illustrations on various websites.

iii. Video: You can record your own video on a phone or video camera with crisp resolutions. You can download clips from the internet or share links by searching something that carries your intended lesson.

iv. Animation: These are videos created with cartoon-like characters using a couple of still pictures, with little practice you can easily create your animations using various tools available.

❖ Ready-made contents

You can get ready-made content sites, apps and other on-line resources such as;

Children Apps

- **Bible Apps for kids:** The Bible App for Kids is the newest member of the YouVersion family of apps. Available for iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. It is always completely free. Through interactive adventures and beautiful animations, children explore the big stories of the Bible. It is a delight-filled experience designed to encourage children's return again and again. It is the beginning of a lifelong love of God's Word.

Its features

- ✓ Easy children-friendly navigation
- ✓ Colourful illustrations
- ✓ Touch-activated animations
- ✓ Engaging and interactive contents that bring the Bible to life.
- ✓ Fun facts and activities designed to help children remember what they learn
- ✓ Special challenges that let children earn rewards.

- **Sharefaith Kid App:** This is an app you can download on your PC and iPad.

Its features

- ✓ It comes with a library of digital Sunday Children's Church lessons, curriculum and activities with stunning Children Bible videos and amazing activities.
- ✓ Sharefaith kids is volunteer friendly, kid focused, Christ centered and extremely easy to prepare and teach.
- ✓ It re-energizes your Children's Church with resources that provide solutions to your biggest needs, such as digital Bible comics, PowerPoint games, Bible quiz videos and lesson slideshows. They make Sunday fun.

- **Superbook:** This Free iPad & iPhone Bible App, Free Android Bible App, Free Kindle Bible App for kids is a media-rich experience that helps bring the Bible to life with videos and images from the SUPERBOOK animation series as well as engaging interactive games.

Its features

- ✓ It is an interesting tool to engage children. You can find Biblical answers to questions that are important to children – questions about life, Jesus and the Bible – in the SUPERBOOK Q&A Contraption.
- ✓ There are games you can use to teach different parts of your lesson, such as Bible Trivia, Word Search etc.
- ✓ It also encourages children to pray. For example, if the class wants to pray for a friend, you can attach a photo of that child to a verse, which can serve as a reminder to pray.

Teenagers Apps

- **YouVersion Bible App:** You need to download this app on your phone or tab, then sign up to create an account. In some cases, publishers may request access to the email address associated with the account in order for the version to be downloaded. It is advised you use this app with teenagers because they can relate with it better.

Its features

- ✓ You can subscribe to plans and study the daily portion of scriptures paired with devotional. This app offers hundreds of Bible-reading plans, including ones specifically for teenagers. Topics range from leadership to dating. To search plans inside the YouVersion app, click "Plan" and "Discover". Then keep scrolling until you find the relevant topic you are looking for.
- ✓ You can grow your prayer life in private or invite teenagers to pray together with you.
- ✓ You can add bookmarks or highlight any verse in the Bible

and easily share the Bible passages on social media in text or email to your teenagers.

- ✓ You can compare versions to see how different translations express a given passage.
- ✓ You can create and share a Bible verse image, shareable arts that use your own photo or free background images with your teenagers every day to encourage daily reading of the Bible
- ✓ You can add your teenagers to a plan, helping you experience the Bible as a community.

- **The Bible Project App:** This is a free app you can download on your phone or PC. You can explore their videos by series, theme, and biblical books or just catch up on their latest work. It is designed to help you and older children & teenagers to build a bible reading skill to see the larger story of the Bible each time you read.

Its features

- ✓ It helps you go beyond chapter and verse to experience sections of Scripture intended to be understood together.
- ✓ Discover patterns as you read. Follow their guided reading journey to discover biblical patterns and collect a set of links for each primary pattern within a movement.
- ✓ Grow your Bible skills. Choose self-paced study through the skills tab. Learn and develop skills that help you experience the Bible in the way it was designed.
- ✓ Explore their video library. Watch and listen to their entire library and podcasts in one place, organized by series and available for download. Explore related Scriptures and resources and follow the Bible curiosity.
- ✓ Small group Bible studies. Watch and discuss together Bible studies around themes featured in the reading journey of the app. To help facilitate an approachable and engaging learning environment for your group.

✓ The podcast features detailed conversation between Tim and Jon and occasional guests, inviting you to explore the biblical theology behind each animated video and series they create.

- **The Bible Engagement App:** This is an app you can download on your phone to help your teenagers learn more about the Bible.

Its features

✓ You can use their curriculum for your Sunday Lessons and meetings.

✓ You use it for group study. Each volume contains four sessions; grouped into six readings in each—one for every day of the week plus one day off. The first session is always a group session, meant to be read together with your small group and the next five readings are personal devotion, meant for you and your small group to read on their own.

✓ Community is one of the most important parts of Bible Engagement Project! This is an in-app messaging feature which provides opportunities to build relationships and create community around discipleship.

Everyone who has access to the app in your Teens class can stay connected with message boards where they can leave encouraging messages, post prayer requests, and have conversations around what they are studying together. So, any messages or comments left here, on your class primary message group, will be visible to anyone you invite to have access to your subscription.

- **Facebook Live:** This app is a hit with teens. Consider doing a daily devotion via live video. Encourage them to spend time in God's Word as well as time with you! Try this at a specific time each day of a month. The habit might take off and create some healthy momentum.

- **Fighterverses.com & Scripture typer.com:** These apps can be downloaded on your phone. They offer free versions, but you will need to pay if you want the full version. They are particularly designed for teenagers to memorize the scriptures.
- **Insta-devos.com:** One great resource to post Bible verses, devotional thoughts, and photos on Instagram is PocketFuel (<https://www.instagram.com/pocketfuel/>).

Encourage your teenagers to follow or create their own material with apps such as

✓ **Word Swag** (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/word-swag-cool-fonts-typography/id645746786?mt=8>) or

Canva (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/canva-graphic-design-photo/id897446215?mt=8>)

For both Children & Teenagers

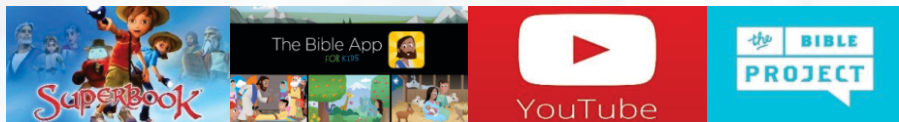
- **Youtube.com:** Almost everybody has this app on their phones. You need to create video contents that can be uploaded and you share the links with your children & teenagers to watch and interact with. Such as Bible lessons, Life skills, Songs, Games, Craft, Dance etc.

Its features

- ✓ Children & Teenagers can subscribe to the Children Church or your channel to get more videos and can also upload their own videos.
- ✓ You can live-stream your Sunday lessons and activities to make room for your virtual audience and for future references too.
- ✓ You can download video clips and use them as illustrations for your lesson.
- ✓ You can watch an entire video to vary activities, this will help to infuse excitement to the whole process of learning in Church. And you can pause the movie and talk about different issues together as they come up.

USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CHILDREN & TEENS CHURCH

✓ You can share links to crafts and other ideas (especially using www.pinterest.com) with other ministers.



❖ Text & Image creation Tools and Resource

Text, Image and Graphics creation tools include;

- **Microsoft Word:** You can make your lessons available to children & teenagers in a soft format, by combining words, arts, designs and images.
- **PDF:** This tool is perfect for exchange of confidential information. Encourage children & teenagers to write articles, draw pictures or do some painting and save it up in PDF format to disallow any unauthorized use.
- **PowerPoint:** This tool is very useful for presentations. You can use different designs, animations, images, voice recordings and videos in your slides as you teach your audience. You can also integrate it with word documents.
- **Canva:** You can design stuff which you can use to create awareness or pass information. You can make grids of pictures from photos of your Children & Teenagers: send parents some of their children's pictures, it is always exciting. Put them in newsletters, project them in church digitally etc.



❖ Image generation Tools & Resources include;

- Google search tagged 'images'
- Pixabay.com
- Shutterstock.com
- Canva
- Graphicriver.com etc.
- Pexels,
- Unsplash,
- New Old stock,
- Kaboompics,
- Free images
- Flickr
- Life of pix
- Crello

❖ Video Creation and Generation Tools & Resources

- Phone Camera (video setting)
- Video Camera
- Filmora
- Video maker
- YouTube

❖ Animation Creation and Generation Tools & Resources

These are simple animation creation apps. You can create your own with little practice, it is a fun way to teach Bible truth to children & teenagers.

- Moviemaker
- Renderforest
- Rawshorts
- Animaker
- Biteable



On-line Communication Platforms

Technology Platforms & Tools to reach a remote audience;

❖ **Chat Platforms**

- Whatsapp
- Telegram
- Facebook
- YouVersion Bible App (Tool for building engagement & community)

❖ **Video-conferencing Platforms**

- YouTube
- Google Meet
- Zoom
- Instagram Live & IG TV
- Facebook Live & Facebook Watchparty
- WhatsApp Video call
- Mixlr (Online Radio)



Technology should never replace the personal relationships that develop through one on one interaction. However, it can complement our teaching by providing more opportunities for learning and being transformed by God's Love.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Align Leaders With Common Strategy and Language – Orange Leaders
2. Free Resources: Developing a Children’s Ministry: A Manual, by Victoria Feazell (gcs.edu)
3. Lesson Preparation Techniques – Mark 6.pdf (freechildrensministrylessons.com)
4. How to teach Sunday School and Love Every Minute of It – Better Better Teachers
5. How To Make a Moving Paper Fish Craft Step by Step (hellowonderful.co)
6. How to Start a Children’s Ministry 9 Steps to Launching a Kids Program at Your Church – (bing.com)
7. Children’s Ministry Names and How to Choose Yours – Ministry Spark
8. Use These Practical Ideas to Help Your Ministry Partner With Parents (childrensministry.com)
9. Ways to Create Parent Connections That Actually Work (childrensministry.com)
10. Salvation Message for Kids: 4 Things You Should Stop Saying (churchleaders.com)
11. How to Share the Gospel With Kids: Keeping It Simple (churchleaders.com)
12. Transformational Discipleship: 4 Keys for childrens ministry DiscipleBlog.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

13. 6 Keys: Jesus disciple - making strategy for kids |DiscipleBlog.com
14. Starting a Discipleship Group: What You Need to Know (justdisciple.com)
15. How to Teach Kids Spiritual Disciplines >> Gather & Grow (gatherandgrow)
16. Reasons Spiritual Disciplines Are Important | Jesus Film Project
17. Teaching with Tech: Engaging Youth in a Digital World (churchofjesuschrist.org)
18. Bible Apps for Teens: Help Kids Connect with Scripture (churchleaders.com)