

3.4.b A Bible Lesson—The Teaching or Bible Story

The Bible lesson consists of the Bible story or teaching. It should be coordinated with the lesson aim. In fact the Bible story should thoroughly explain the teaching reflected in the lesson aim. It is sometimes called the development of the lesson. It should not be merely lecture, the teacher talking and the students listening. No! The Bible lesson can and should use a variety of active teaching methods and learning activities, but all should be geared to getting across the Bible teaching.

Principles for teaching a Bible lesson

1. It is very important that the teacher plan the lesson in advance. Chapter 17 will give more ideas about how to do this. The teacher should know the lesson very well before he tries to teach it. The teaching will only be as strong as the teacher's preparation and planning. The teaching will be strong and good if the teacher has studied the lesson carefully and learned it well, and if he has planned carefully how he will teach it.
2. The teacher should keep in mind the lesson aim, planning his teaching so that the children will easily grasp, understand and remember the principal truths the teacher intended to convey.
3. The teacher should use his teaching manual or lesson guide, if he has one, in preparation of the lesson, but he should not read the lesson to the children from the teacher's guide.
4. The teacher should not read long Bible passages to the children all at once.
5. The teacher should always teach with enthusiasm.

One possible way to teach a Bible lesson that has worked well in Africa

1. Divide the lesson Scripture into short segments according to the natural divisions in the action or the logic of the lesson. Each segment should consist of one, two, or three verses.
2. For each segment of lesson Scripture, follow this guide:
 - Read the verse or verses of the segment slowly and with expression.
 - Ask the children questions about the verses.
 - The children act out the actions or ideas of the Bible story
 - The children sing a simple chorus telling what happened in the Bible story, or reiterating the main idea
3. You can easily understand this method by studying the following example of an actual lesson from the Bible book of Jonah. Look at how we have divided each lesson into short segments. Notice how the teaching of each segment consists of four parts—reading the verses, asking questions about them, acting them out, and singing the main ideas.

Here is an example of some real Bible lessons from the book of Jonah:

Lesson 1

Segment 1. God calls Jonah (Jonah 1:1-2)

- A. Read out loud with expression: Jonah 1:1-2
- B. Ask: Where did God tell Jonah to go? (to Nineveh) (Or other questions)
- C. Two children act out God calling Jonah
- D. Sing "Jonah, Go to Nineveh" to the tune of Yesu Azali Awa (A popular song widely known in the Congo—the key is to choose a tune the children already know and like.)

Segment 2. Jonah runs away from God. (Jonah 1:3)

- A. Read out loud with expression: Jonah 1:3
- B. Ask: How did Jonah refuse God's word to him? (By running away) (Or other questions)

C. Children act out these events:

- Jonah packing up his things
 - Jonah going to Joppa (Remember that God called him to go to Nineveh)
 - Jonah buying a ticket at Joppa for Tarshish (Remember God called him to go to Nineveh)
 - Jonah getting in the boat to go to Tarshish
 - Jonah was trying to run away from God (Children act like they are hiding.)
- D. Sing “Jonah ran away from God. O dear! O my!” to a popular tune

Segment 3. God seeks and finds Jonah (Jonah 1:4)

- A. Read out loud with expression: Jonah 1:4
- B. Ask: What was Jonah thinking? (He would run away where God would not find him.) Why didn't it work?
(God sought him and found him.)
- C. One child acts out the part of God who seeks and finds Jonah (another child) where he is hiding. Then all the children blow like the wind. Next they act as if they are all in a boat that is being tossed around by a big storm.

LET'S REVIEW

Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence:

The teacher should _____ and _____ the lesson before trying to teach it.

The teacher should keep in mind the lesson _____ so as to teach so that the children will readily comprehend and remember it.

The teacher should not read to the children from what book? _____
Why? _____

Should the teacher read long passages of Scripture to the children? _____ Why or why not?

The teacher should teach with _____.

In using the method we illustrated, explain briefly the four activities that would follow each short segment of the lesson:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LET'S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

As you watch other teachers, what parts of the Bible lesson do they utilize and what parts do they frequently omit? Why?

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Acts 16:16-22 is the story of Paul and Silas bringing the Good News to girl who was a fortuneller. Read the passage to get the main ideas in mind. Then divide the story into short segments following the actions of the story or the main thoughts in it. Each segment should be one to three verses. Then describe what you would do for each of the activities—Questions, Acting out the story, and Singing. Write out your ideas on the following chart. I have completed the first one for you as an example.

Verses to read	Questions to Ask	What to Act Out	What to Sing