

How can we begin the Bible Lesson? (The Introduction)

When it is time to begin teaching a Bible lesson, the children may be thinking of many other things that have nothing to do with the Bible. The teacher needs to get their attention and draw their interest into the Bible lesson. If he succeeds with his introduction, the children will no longer be thinking about other things, but they will be thinking about ideas related to the Bible lesson. This will greatly increase their desire to follow the Bible teaching.

What methods should not be used as the introduction?

Some teachers begin the lesson in ways that are not very effective. Some of these less effective methods are:

- Reading the whole, long lesson verse by verse from the Bible
- Reading the lesson to the class from the teacher’s manual
- Announcing the lesson aim for the day
- Scolding the children because they are not quiet and listening

None of these methods are usually very effective, because they fail to get the students thinking about the lesson, and because some of them take a long time, during which the children will become restless and inattentive.

What methods can make effective introduction? Here are some ideas:

- A question for the children to think about that gets them thinking along the lines of the lesson
- A short story related to their lives
- A problem to which the Bible lesson will give the Biblical answer
- Revision of previous lessons if they were chronological, leading up to the day’s lesson
- A skit on the theme of the lesson
- An object to show that is related to the lesson and gets the children’s attention
- A picture related to the lesson
- A song related to the lesson

Any one of these methods could be effective if it is related to the lesson, if it draws the students’ curiosity or interest, and if it is not too long.

Here are some examples of actual introductions that could work with certain lessons:

1. What would you think if your father gave one of the younger children in your family a beautiful new article of clothing, but to you, the oldest, he did not give anything? How would you feel about that? (Give the children a chance to respond briefly.) In the book of Genesis, we meet one of the younger children of a family. His name is Joseph. His older brothers were jealous of him because their father Jacob gave him, one of the youngest children, a beautiful new robe. But he gave nothing at all to them, the older brothers. (Bible lesson follows from Genesis chapter 37.)

What two methods are used in this introduction?

_____ and _____

I have used this introduction several times and found it very effective. Why do you think it is so effective?

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2. Sing the song, “O lying, o lying, o lying—quit doing it!) (English translation of an African song in the Kituba language of Congo). Children, the Bible tells us the story of two people who told lies. I think they thought their lie was a “little white lie” as they say, that is, a lie that didn’t really matter. But their lie brought them great sorrow. (Bible lessons follows from Acts 5:1-11.)

What method is used in this introduction? _____

Notice that after the initial method, there is a brief transition tying the thought of the song to the theme of the lesson.

How could you use review as an effective introduction to the lesson?



Under what circumstances could reviewing previous lessons be an effective introduction to the day’s lesson? Review can be effective if the lessons are following through one Bible book, for example, if the lessons follow the book of Acts. It can also be effective if the lessons are biographical, following the life of a Bible person, for example, the life of the Apostle Peter. It can be effective if the lessons are following one particular theme or idea, for example if they are all about prayer.

If the lessons follow one particular Bible book, review is important because it helps the students remember the main ideas and logical development of the book up to the point of today’s lesson, or the chronological order of events. If the lessons follow the life of a Bible character, review is helpful so the children can remember what the person has done up to that point and begin to wonder what he will do next or how some of his problems will be resolved. If the lessons follow a theme or idea, review will get the children thinking about that theme or idea and remind them what they have already learned.

The teacher should be careful not to spend too much time reviewing. He shouldn’t begin again and retell the previous Bible stories. He should review only big ideas, using short phrases to do so.

Questions and Problems—two very effective methods

Questions make very good introductions, especially questions that provoke thought. “Why” or “Why do you think” questions can be particularly helpful. Another effective method is posing problems they might encounter in daily life. Students relate to the problem, then the Bible lesson offers a solution.

How long should the introduction be?

The introduction will be more effective if it is not too long. One minute is often a good goal for a time limit, but it could take two or three minutes if you use a skit or a song. It would be rare that the introduction would need more than three minutes. Under no circumstances should it ever go over five minutes. One to three minutes is ideal.

LET’S REVIEW

Why is the introduction an important part of the lesson?

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Name six methods that could be effective ways to introduce a Bible lesson.

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Under what circumstances might review make an effective introduction to a Bible lesson?

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LET’S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Let’s think again about the Bible lessons we discussed in the Chapter Twelve. Choose one good way to introduce each lesson. (There may be several effective methods for each lesson. Choose one you think will work well.) Write out the exact words you would use with the children, putting activities in parentheses ().

Temptation of Jesus
Matthew 4:1-11

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The Two Houses
Matthew 7:24-27



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Jesus Ate with Sinners
Matthew 9:10-13

.....
Parable of the Lost Coin
Luke 15:8-10

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Now check: Will the introduction you have chosen attract the children’s interest? Does your introduction relate to the Bible lesson so that you can move easily into the Bible lesson? Can your introduction be completed comfortably in one to three minutes? If not, try again.

