

3.9 How can we review past lessons effectively?

It is very important to review past lessons. Sometimes teaching “sticks” only after we have heard it many times. Reviewing past lessons and past memory verses can help the children remember what they have learned “long term” and assimilate it deeply into their consciousness. It truly is very, very important.

Of course, if we were to tell past stories over again and review past Bible verses over again, there wouldn't be any time left to teach the new lesson or the new memory verse. Our time for review is short.

It is not very interesting, either, to hear the same thing in the same way over again. Younger children will like that, but older ones will quickly get bored with it and soon they will stop coming to Sunday school. They may get the idea we don't have anything new or interesting to teach them.

The two major principles for good review are: 1. It should not take up too much time, and 2. We should use a variety of games for review to ensure that the children do not get tired of it.

Review is not only recalling last week's lesson, but remembering and putting together in chronological or logical order the teaching of many lessons comprising a unit of study. A review game can be done in as little as 3 minutes each week. If the lessons are following a chronological or logical order, the teacher should spend a couple of minutes each week briefly recalling the main points of last week's lesson. However, he can also lead the children in a Bible game which can review ideas from many different lessons.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF BIBLE REVIEW GAMES:

- **Who am I?** This is a game for children who can read. It works very well with lessons from one particular Bible book. You need paper and a marker, or a blackboard and chalk, and a chair. A child sits in the chair facing the others. You write in large letters on the paper or the blackboard the name of a person from one of the lessons studied. The child in the chair should not be able to see the name, but the other children should. The child in the chair asks the others questions that can be answered “Yes” or “No”. Make sure the children respond correctly. Example: The paper says “Mary”, so that is the name the child is trying to guess. He may ask, “Am I a man?” The children answer, “No.” So, the child then knows that the character is a woman. He may ask again, “Did I give birth to Jesus?” The children must answer, “Yes.” Then the child knows enough to make a guess. “Am I Mary?” he asks. His guess is correct, so he chooses another child to sit in the chair and he writes out another name for that child to guess.
- **What am I doing?** This game can be used with both readers and non-readers. It can be used well with Bible book studies or biographical studies of the lives of Biblical characters. Talk to one child ahead of time, telling him one important event from a recent lesson. The other children should not know what the event is. Then that child tries to act out the event or show it by gestures without saying a word or making a sound. The other students guess what event he is showing until they get it right. Example: If you have been studying the book of Exodus, you may tell a child, “You are Pharaoh and you refuse to let the People of Israel go free.” The child tries to act out Pharaoh refusing to let the people go. The other children call out guesses until someone guesses correctly.
- **Singing Review** Make up a song (words and music) that shows the main ideas or events in a unit of lessons. Sing it every week, adding a bit each time as the lessons progress. Add gestures or rhythmic movements for added interest. This can be effective with all ages.

- **XXOO** This is a competitive game. It is effective with older children, or with school age children where all the children are about the same grade level. Draw two horizontal and two vertical lines in a # shape on paper, on a blackboard, or in the sand. Divide the children in two teams. Let the children chose names that make them feel important, like “Children of France” or “Soldiers of Jesus”. One team uses the X sign, the other team uses the O sign. The object of the game is to get three X’s or three O’s in a row, either up and down, across, or diagonally. The opposing team tries to block them so they cannot put three of their signs in a row. Prepare questions about the lesson or lessons to be reviewed. Ask one team the first question. If they answer correctly, they put their sign in whatever box they choose. If they do not answer correctly they cannot place a sign that turn. The first team to place three of their signs in a row wins.
- **Memories of a person** Tell the name of a person the class has studied. If a picture is available, show it. If not, have a child dress up and pretend to be that person. Have the children tell as many things as they can about that person. Give them one point for each fact they remember. Keep track of their points, and have them try to beat their own score next week.
- **Memories of a voyage** This activity can be used effectively for any group of lessons that involves a person or group moving about from place to place, for example, for lessons on the Exodus, the Life of Jesus, or the Journeys of Paul. Draw a big map on the ground and have the children walk about, following the movement of the character(s) from place to place.
- **Tell a neighbor** One child pretends to be a character from one of the stories you have studied. He may dress up if possible, but that is not necessary. Ask the other children if they could tell that character just one thing, what would they tell him or her? Choose five children to come up and tell the character their message. They may shake their finger at him if they wish. (Example: A child pretends to be the Ananias of Acts chapter 5. Children come up and may say things like: Ananias, why did you lie? Don’t you know God does not like lying? If you hadn’t lied, God would not have killed you.” Etc.
- **Gestures** Tell again the bare outline of a story or group of stories you have learned. With each point, lead the children in a gesture to show what they are saying. This can be effective with all ages, even with younger children.
- **What letter?** Children need to be fairly good readers and spellers to play this game. It is recommended for fifth grade and up. Think of a short phrase (1 to 5 words) that is important to one or more lessons you have learned. On a piece of paper or a blackboard, write a short line for each letter. Leave larger spaces between words. The children guess letters that may be in the phrase. If they guess a letter that is in it, write the letter on the correct blanks. As the blanks fill in, the children try to guess what the phrase is.
- **What is it?** Tell one of the students an object that was important to one or more lessons, without letting the others hear. The child cannot say the name of the object, but he begins to describe it and tell how it was used. The others shout out guesses until they guess the correct object. Example: If the object was the manna God gave the children of Israel to eat in the wilderness, the child might say something like this: “It was white. It laid on the ground. It tasted like honey. The people picked it up every morning,” etc.

- **Tell us** One child begins to draw something from one of the lessons. As he draws, the other children try to guess what it is.

Every week, the teacher should choose only one of these or other games or activities for lesson review. It is not necessary to review every last thing every week. It is sufficient to recall again some of the things that were presented in previous weeks. If the children have a favorite game, you can play that one more frequently, or allow them to choose from time to time between different games. It is important, however, to maintain overall variety in the games and the kinds of games you use.

REVIEWING BIBLE MEMORY VERSES

It is important to review not only Bible lessons, but Bible memory verses. Every week the teacher should plan to review briefly the verse presented the week before, and then to teach a new one. Usually we think in terms of saying the review memory verse two times to help fix it in the children's minds. (This is in contrast to the new memory verse, which should usually be repeated six times or more.) If the verse is made into a song, this will make it very easy to review it. After the second week, we think of the verses that have been presented as entering into a "library" of verses known. We think of the library as divided into groups of verses which correspond to the teaching units we have taught. In addition to repeating last week's verse twice again, each week the teacher may choose one game to review one or more other verses that have already been taught within that unit of study. The game should take two to three minutes.

Here are some examples of memory verse review games:

- **Tennis** The teacher puts his hands together, and two children push them back and forth like a tennis ball. The teacher announces a verse they have learned and nods his head at one of the children. That child must say the first word of the verse, pushing the teacher's hands toward the other child. He says the next word, pushing the teacher's hands back, and so forth until the verse is completed or until one child misses a word. If a child misses a word, the other children correct him and he must sit down. The remaining child chooses another to take his place and complete the verse.
- **The Forgetful Teacher** In this game, the teacher begins to recite the verse, but in the middle of the verse he pretends to forget it. The children must "help" him, reminding him of the words he has "forgotten."
- **Stand Up and Speak** The teacher indicates a review verse and a child to begin the game. He must stand up and say the first word of the verse. The child to his right must say the next words, and so on to the end of the verse.
- **What's the address?** After the children have learned several Bible verses, write the address or reference of each verse in large letters on a blackboard or paper. Prepare also each of the verses written out on a small card without the reference. Choose a child who is a good reader. He shuffles the cards and then begins to read one of the verses without telling the reference. The other children call out the reference to the verse.
- **Program to show off accomplishments** Children love to show off what they have learned. They will work hard if the church will arrange for a program, maybe twice a year, in which they can show off their accomplishments. During the program, all the children together recite a verse in unison with appropriate gestures. They sing another verse. Two or three children recite a verse individually.

Finally, they demonstrate a game using Bible verses. They should use a different verse for each part of the program. Of course they may think up many new ideas of their own. These are just suggestions to help churches get started.

- **Flannelboard mix-up** Write each word of a verse on paper and back it with flannel or felt scraps. Mix the words up on a flannelboard and call on two students to work together to put them in order. The other students act as judges. If you have two flannelboards, two teams could race against one another. If not, you could add interest for older students by racing to see how fast they can do it, and trying to beat their own record.
- **Mix and match** Another flannelboard review game involves writing out the first phrase of a verse on one card and the reference on another. Mix them up on the flannelboard and have the children match reference to beginning phrase. Then ask for volunteers to complete each verse orally.

LET'S REVIEW

What are two principles we should remember regarding review?

1..... 2.....

What is the very best way to review Bible verses?

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What is another very effective way?

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LET'S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Out of the lesson review ideas we have explained, which would you like to try first?

Which memory verse review game would you like to try first?

Now try to think of another review game or activity. You may make one up, or use one you have observed somewhere else.

Give it a name and explain it here:

For the next three weeks or for your next three teaching opportunities, try three review games. Record here which ones you tried, and how the children liked them. Write down any notes that may help it to go better next time.

Game:	How did it go?	Notes for next time:
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Game:	How did it go?	Notes for next time:
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Game:	How did it go?	Notes for next time:
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