13 WAYS TO TEACH KIDS MORE EFFECTIVELY

If you've spent any time in children's ministry, you've probably asked yourself this question — *Are they learning anything?* It's a question that drives kids pastors everywhere to keep adjusting and refining their programs.

It's pretty easy to tell when kids are having fun. We can see it in the ways they laugh, play a game, or participate in the activities we design for them. It's not always easy to tell if they're learning and *growing* though, and we all want to help kids grow.

To teach kids effectively, we can't just open the Bible and teach. We need **strategic and age-appropriate teaching methods** if we want them to remember, personalize, and apply what we teach.

In Grow Kids Curriculum, our teaching time is designed to answer three questions. We didn't invent these questions. Rather, they're the questions teachers and communicators from every discipline agree are answered by every compelling sermon, talk, lecture, or lesson.

- **WHAT?** What are we talking about?
- **SO WHAT?** Why does it matter to God and to us?
- **NOW WHAT?** What should we do about what we just learned?

When we teach, every element should help kids process through and answer these questions. The problem is we often hear "teaching" and start thinking of sermons and talking at kids, but remember that thing about **age-appropriate teaching methods**? For most kids, listening to a sermon isn't the best way for them to learn. Sure, sermons are great, and they're an important part of how we tell kids about who God is, but if we want to be effective communicators, we'll want to incorporate other strategies too. So, here are 13 ways (with examples from Grow Kids!) you can make your teaching effective—by using something other than just a sermon.

SCRIPTURE

Reading passages from the Bible is a big part of how we teach about who God is. Scripture can be an effective teaching tool when we ...

- Read passages of Scripture together.
- Invite a volunteer to read to the group.
- Invite an older kid to read to the group.

QUESTIONS AND POLLS

These two methods give kids the chance to share their opinions and thoughts, which keeps them engaged and helps us better understand their perspectives. You can ask things like ...

- "What makes you feel secure?" before you talk about the way God makes us feel secure.
- Use a "Would You Rather" poll to ease into your teaching time.

PERSONAL STORIES

Our own stories and experiences can give kids real-life examples of faith, doubt, and difficulties to learn from and remind them they're not alone. You can use stories to ...

- Talk about when you searched for peace as you talk about the ways we can find peace in God.
- Explain how a friendship helped you grow your faith during a series on creating lasting friendships.

IMAGES, VIDEOS, AND MUSIC

We all know how hard it can be to keep the attention of kids. Images, videos, and music work to engage their eyes and ears, and help us recapture their attention when it wanders. You can use these three building blocks to ...

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- Help kids connect with God through worship.
- Teach about the importance of teamwork with a video clip of a team of superheroes working together.

OBJECT LESSONS

Kids aren't quite able to grasp abstract thoughts and concepts. Object lessons give concrete experiences to help them understand or remember these ideas. You could use object lessons to ...

- Poke a sharp pencil all the way through both sides of a baggie filled with water to demonstrate trust and the way God can do the unexpected.
- Talk about the safety God brings us by looking at a safety manual or booklet.

ACTIVITIES

Activities help engage kids by getting them moving and interacting in ways that will help them better remember what they learned. Activities are effective because, at the end of the day, kids don't just hear a lesson—they experience it. You can use activities to ...

- Play a game from the Grow Games App.
- Talk about trusting God's plan by having kids follow a step-by-step LEGO building guide.

MOMENTS OF REFLECTION

It's important to give kids a chance to sit quietly, write, think, or pray, so they can better process what is being taught. Reflection moments can look like ...

- Letting kids make a Christmas card featuring a one-word summary of the lesson.
- Having kids help create a word cloud that reminds them God guides them to safety no matter where they go.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESPONSE

A response helps give kids a chance to do something about what they've learned, like making a commitment or choosing the next step. Responses can look like ...

- Drawing a picture that shows God overcoming kids "giant" fears and uncertainties.
- Making a paper chain of people kids can love and show kindness to.

PRAYER

Prayer helps kids connect and talk with God on their own or as a group. You can use prayer to ...

- Show kids how to pray and talk with God.
- Create short, memorable prayers for kids to build into their spiritual habits.

DISCUSSION

Discussions create space for kids to process out loud and learn with their peers. To be most effective, discussion questions shouldn't only summarize a lesson but should also ask questions that get kids thinking and personalizing what they've learned like ...

- When are some times you might need to overcome fear?
- Why do you think God sometimes works behind the scenes, not center stage?

If you're looking to make your teaching more effective for kids, consider adding some of these building blocks into your teaching time. With a weekly teaching strategy and a little creativity, you can teach in ways that capture the attention of kids and get them to learn and grow.

And hey, if you're using Grow Kids Curriculum, we're using these 13 teaching building blocks already! For every week of every year, we provide teaching content designed by real in-the-trenches pastors and volunteers in children's ministry who understand how to teach kids effectively. And we give you everything you need to make it happen!

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