



"TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN THE BIBLE THROUGH GAMES"

"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." Deuteronomy 6:6,7 (NIV)

The Bible is just as relevant today as when Jesus walked on the earth; God WANTS to be involved in our daily lives and our children need to learn this at an early age - and it's OUR responsibility as parents to teach our children!

It's not as difficult as you think!

"Evangelism" and "discipleship" are simply sharing with others what we know about the love and mercy of God; and how we can obey Him and serve Him in our everyday lives. Our Christian faith is all based upon our **personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ** on a daily basis. Understanding this, it becomes obvious that the best place for children to learn of salvation and be disciplined is in the home from their own parents!

"Joy With Jesus" is a ministry of International Missionary Outreach Fellowship Inc.

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Or our local ministry partner:

You may say: "but I don't know that much about the Bible myself!" The first stage is obviously to develop our own relationship with Jesus and knowledge of God through reading and studying the Bible - but we don't have to wait until we've studied the WHOLE Bible before we have something to share with our children! In fact our children need to learn how to turn to the Bible to find answers to their questions and problems - we can teach them by example!

God has given us a wonderful promise for such situations - it is found in James 1:5,6 *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."* (NIV)

The games shared here are merely ideas that can be adapted to different needs and situations. Some families consist of one child; others of two children separated by 10 years or more; yet others of five or six children of different ages. Some families have special needs such as a child with a handicap or a hard-working single parent. But the Lord KNOWS each situation - and both His commandment (Deut. 6:6,7) and His promise (James 1:5,6) remain the same! God is the Creator of ALL - He can create new ideas just for YOUR situation!

It is our hope that this workshop will encourage you to accept this responsibility and experience the loving help of the Lord as you make the Bible come alive in YOUR home to your own children!

Gerald and Shirley Davis January 2003

Shirley Davis has more than 20 years experience ministering to children in Texas and Mexico, both inside and outside of the church walls. She and her husband Gerald raised six children and have spent the past 6 years living and ministering in various parts of Mexico. There they worked among both Nahuatl Indian and Mestizo peoples, and in August of 2002 Shirley spent 10 days ministering and teaching a seminar in Cuba. She has taught children's ministry seminars and workshops in Texas and Cuba, and all over Mexico from Chihuahua to Cozumel; from small villages in the desert to Mexico City.

Gerald and Shirley have recently returned to expand their home base in Henderson, TX, and plan to continue their ministry locally as well as travel to other states and foreign countries. Their ministry is part of the non-profit 501(c)3 corporation International Missionary Outreach Fellowship Inc. For further information on this and other areas of ministry, to obtain materials or arrange a seminar, contact them at the address below.

Ask about the "PAL Plan" which is an exciting sponsorship plan to enable children in the U.S.A to send the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Bible to children around the world who do not have the opportunity to hear the Gospel as we do.

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5. RACES

These can be used as object lessons to give a quick teaching. If there are only a very few children they can be done as activities instead of races.

Three-legged race - after a regular 3-legged race, the leader talks about: the importance of being "joined" to the right people; moving through life with friends who go in the same direction as us or want to go in a different direction.

Blindfolded race - a child can attempt to walk the course blindfolded and is then helped down the course by a friend. The group talks about the problems and dangers of "being blind"; the benefits of having a "friend"; how Jesus wants to be our friend through life.

Tug-of-war - afterwards, the leader talks about how our warfare is not against one another but against the devil; the importance of unity rather than fighting alone.

Balloon scripture race - according to the note on page 7, slips of paper with scripture texts are prepared for each child or team, and then inserted into balloons (different color for each team). Each person must run in turn and grab a balloon, taking it back to the next person, who then carries it and runs to grab another and so on, until each team has all its balloons. The balloons are then popped, the papers with texts collected, scriptures read and letters formed to discover the correct word.

1. SPECIAL PLAY SETTINGS

Look for opportunities to bring Bible stories into the children's regular play activities. Here are some simple ideas to encourage them to "create" a special play setting, which you can then use as a type of object lesson to tell them a Bible story.

House - (sheets draped over a table)

- a) the man who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:24-27)
- b) the woman who built a room for the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:8-17)
- c) a paralytic lowered through the roof (Luke 5:18-25)
- d) a boy who lived in the house of God (1 Samuel 3)
- e) a woman who hid spies in her house (Joshua 2)

Store - (groceries and cans "sold" for play money)

- a) Joseph stored up food for a famine (Genesis 41:46-57)
- b) a widow's store of food multiplied (1 Kings 17:7-16)
- c) a store of oil multiplied (2 Kings 4:1-7)
- d) a king who asked for wisdom and became very rich (2 Chronicles 1:7-12; 9:1-14)
- e) a rich fool and wise words from Jesus (Luke 12:16-31)

Tea party - (plates, cups and small snacks)

- a) a big problem at a wedding
(John 2:1-11)
- b) a poisoned stew leads to a miracle
(2 Kings 4:38-41)
- c) a supper where feet were washed
(John 13:1-17)
- d) an expensive bowl of stew
(Genesis 25:27-34)
- e) boys who preferred vegetables
(Daniel 1:1-16)

Boat - (large box or couch, broom-handle mast with flag)

- a) a frightening storm calmed
(Mark 4:35-41)
- b) a boatload of animals
(Genesis 6-8)
- c) a disobedient man thrown out of the boat
(Jonah 1-2)
- d) a miraculous catch of fish
(John 21:1-14)
- e) a terrible shipwreck but no-one died
(Acts 27:9-44)

Nurse - (apron, little tubes of candy, bandages)

- a) ten sick men healed but only one says thanks
(Luke 17:11-19)
- b) a strange ointment made out of mud
(John 9:1-33)
- c) a man healed in a dirty river
(2 Kings 5:1-14)

Bible treasure hunt - according to the note on page 7, prepare a word for each child (or team), ensuring that the words all have the same number of letters. Try to use the same books of the Bible for each child to make it fair (or deliberately use harder ones for older children!). Write each child's texts on slips of paper (a different color for each child) and then hide them around the room or yard before starting the game. The children must first find all their slips of paper, then look up the verses, write down the first letter of the first word of each text, then re-arrange the letters to form the correct word.

For a simpler version - write only one letter of the word on each slip of paper (thus not using the Bible). Best for Bible names and books.

Beanbag games - children sit in a circle and pass a beanbag to music or until the leader claps. The child with the beanbag then must name a Bible person, book or place; sing a Bible song; quote a verse or answer a Bible question.

Memory verse games - using a blackboard or large poster board, write a Bible name or verse so that each letter or word can be covered by a paper with a number. Then a beanbag is thrown onto a numbered sheet, or passed around until music stops and the child picks a numbered slip of paper. The corresponding number is then removed from the word or verse, revealing part of it.

3. ACTIVITIES

These basic ideas can be adapted according to the age of the children and how many there are.

Four Gospels game - indoors or outdoors, four "bases" or corners are chosen, and named Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The leader is in the middle and with eyes closed, counts out loud to 20, while the others all quietly go to stand in one of the corners (not all in the same one!) At the count of 20, if anyone is still not in a corner, he is "out". The leader calls out one of the four names (without opening his eyes) and all the children in the corner are out. The game continues until only one person is left, who then becomes the leader.

Bible scavenger hunt - using a concordance, scriptures are written down that speak of articles that are likely to be found around the house or yard. A list is then made of all these scripture texts and given to each child, who must then look up the texts in the Bible (always use the same version) and hunt the corresponding object. E.g. Job 14:2.

Follow the leader - children follow the leader and act out the animal mentioned as the leader briefly tells a story such as Daniel in the lion's den, Balaam and the donkey, the plague of frogs in Egypt, Jonah and the fish, Elijah fed by ravens etc.

- d) a woman healed by touching Jesus' robe (Mark 5:24-34)
- e) a crippled man who jumped for joy (Acts 3:1-10)

Church - (pulpit, chairs and bible)

- a) leaders of the temple taught by a boy (Luke 2:41-52)
- b) the first laws written by God (Exodus 20; 32:15,16)
- c) a preaching service in the pouring rain (Ezra 10:7-17)
- d) a young man falls asleep during the sermon (Acts 20:7-12)
- e) the temple used as a marketplace (John 2:13-17)

Babies - (baby dolls, feeding bottles)

- a) a baby in a basket in the river (Exodus 1:22-2:10)
- b) a baby born in a barn (Luke 2:1-20)
- c) a baby almost cut in two (1 Kings 3:16-28)
- d) a baby boy with a 100 year old father (Genesis 15:1-6; 18:1-15; 21:1-7)
- e) a baby boy promised to God (1 Samuel 1)

2. QUIET GAMES

Use the principle behind these games to develop others to teach and reinforce Bible lessons.

Christian Fishin' - a picture game available from IMOF Inc. used to tell Bible stories (note - these pictures can also be used in other games as explained later).

Bible Bingo - a picture game available from IMOF Inc. used to teach about men and women of faith from the Bible.

Noah's animals - after telling the story of Noah's Ark, let the children sit in a circle and in turn, each must name an animal that would have been on the Ark (no fish, unicorns etc). The leader repeats each animal in a loud voice so that everyone can hear, and when someone names an animal that has already been named, that person drops out of the game, finally leaving the winner. Alternatively, a list can be made of all the animals to see how many different animals the children know.

Secret code - the group makes up its own secret code, deciding on a symbol for each letter of the alphabet, for example → for "A", ♥ for "H" and so on. Then "secret" messages, scriptures or names can be written in code to be deciphered by the children.

Clueless crosswords - see how many Bible names, or books of the Bible, can be fitted together in a crossword formation.

Haman's Hangman - play hangman using Bible names or books.

Scripture scramble - write the words of memory verses on separate pieces of paper. Mix them up and see who can unscramble them correctly first.

Puzzle pages - various examples are shown of puzzle pages requiring scripture texts found in the Bible. These puzzle pages are not difficult to make up, with the use of a good concordance. It is suggested that each participant use a copy of the exact same translation of the Bible used in the preparation, as differences in translation may affect the results.

NOTE - an important basic principle in making puzzle pages and also in developing more active games that require the use of Bible scripture hunts is explained as follows:

Decide on the word answer (for example TITUS). Write down each letter separately and then look through the Bible to find a verse that begins with a word whose first letter is the letter required. E.g. T - Revelation 2:1

I - James 1:5 etc. Then write out the texts on slips of paper for use in the game.