

Let's Dance!



After crossing the Red Sea and being delivered from your enemies, what would YOU want to do? A seven year old in my Bible class answered, "I would do this!" and then proceeded to dance around our classroom clearly demonstrating pure joy.

Sometimes the illustrations I've selected and the scripts from which I read simply pale in comparison to the spontaneous responses of children who hear about what God has done.

Over a span of about a month we had journeyed along with Moses and the Hebrews and felt the pain of their suffering in Egyptian bondage. We had seen God at work through the [ten plagues](#). We worked our way through the emotional experience of the night when [the angel of death passed over](#). We trembled as [we crossed through the Red sea](#) on dry land with great walls of water on either side of us and the enemy right on our heels.

Now, after reviewing these events one more time, I asked the children in our Bible class to imagine being a Hebrew that day and looking back over the water of the Red Sea. I asked them to imagine the feeling of knowing that God was so strong and loved us so much that he had conquered our enemies and gotten us out of Egypt. My question "What would you feel like doing?" was a rhetorical question so I was simply floored when this seven year old spontaneously responded in *exactly* the way the Hebrews did!

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.'" Exodus 15:20-21, NIV

At that point I put other activities aside and we all did just what the Hebrews had done. We danced in praise to God for what he had done. Never mind that we were in an upstairs room and the adults in the Bible class below us thought I had possibly lost control of my

class. (Never mind that I probably DID lose control over them for just a few moments). Never mind that the kids danced much better than the teacher.

The fact is that we participated together in some of the most “Biblical moments” I had experienced in quite some time.

The children went on the demonstrate dance moves depicting the plagues and the Passover and the crossing through the sea. Then, after what turned out to be a rather morbid rendition of the annihilation of Pharaoh and his army, I drew the children back in together and we participated in some quieter activities.

Once again, I thank God that I have the honour of sharing His Word with children and that so often the children become my teachers.

[More ideas for teaching using movement and dance](#)

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Wading Lambs and Swimming Elephants



As a Scripture was being publicly read in the church of my childhood I would sometimes watch my grandmother’s finger slide across the page of her Bible. As a small child I would light up when I could occasionally read a word or two.

There is no other book like the Bible in its importance for people of all ages. It has always amazed me how God's Word can seem so simple and yet so complex. Even when I am reading Scripture as I prepare lessons for infants and toddlers I am often astounded at a new concept that I had never noticed before.

I think Gregory the Great said it best many many years ago when he wrote the following (emphasis is mine),

*"Divine speech sometimes stirs up the clever with mysteries, but more often provides consolation for the simple with the obvious. It has out in the open food for children but keeps hidden away the things that fill the minds of the eminent with awe. Scripture is like a river again, broad and deep, **shallow enough here for the lamb to go wading, but deep enough there for the elephant to swim**".*

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT: *MORALIA ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB*,
SECTION 4. [CLICK HERE FOR FULL TEXT](#).

What a blessing to help lambs wade in God's Word! As I teach children I want to be attentive to their stage of development and help them experience God fully. I usually have my own Bible open on the table when I am teaching so that children can see that I refer to it and respect what God says.

In addition to my own Bible I want children to be very familiar with handling a Bible on their own. If at all possible I try to have bibles available for the children. Over the years I've developed a few measures for what children of various ages are able to do so I'm sharing them with you here in case you might find them useful in your teaching and at home.

Infants and Toddlers



Ages
0-2 Years
Infants-Toddlers

- Allow the infants and toddlers to hold small Bibles. These should be inexpensive because they will inevitably, at one time or another, be chewed and pulled apart and the pages torn.
- Show them how to hold the Bible carefully and how to turn pages.
- Place a sticker of Jesus inside the front cover so the children can "find Jesus" when they hold their bibles.
- Hold the Bible in front of each child, in turn, and slide your finger along as you "read" from it. I usually read, "God Loves Suzy." (inserting the child's name) Or "God loves Mummy." "God loves Daddy."

Pre-School (ages 3-5 years)



**Ages
3-5 Years
Pre-School**

- Pre-Schoolers can look at pictures in a children's Bible. If you do not have picture Bibles then tuck pictures between the pages of a Bible before class.
- Guide the children in pretending to read along with you as you tell a story or read a verse.
- Children of this age can learn to spell and write a few basic Bible words. I use magnetic letters or puzzles to do this. And of course they are learning to write letters at this age so they really enjoy just writing the letters. We practice one word over a few weeks until the children have it down. They are so proud of themselves!
 - G-O-D
 - J-E-S-U-S
 - B-I-B-L-E ([song](#))

Younger Primary School Age (ages 6-7 years)



**Ages
6-7 Years
Primary**

- Children of this age can learn to recite the names of the 66 books of the Bible. I think it really helps to learn them by singing the songs.
 - ([New Testament Song](#))
 - ([Old Testament Song](#))
- With help, children can find a book, chapter and verse in the Bible when given a Scripture reference. This is much easier to accomplish with a few children than a big group.
- Depending on their reading ability they can usually read a Bible verse that you have chosen (short and simple).
- They can use their finger to follow along in their own Bible as the teacher reads

Older Primary School Age (ages 8-10 years)



**Ages
8-10 Years
Primary**

- Depending on reading level children of this age might be able to read a few verses in a row or even a very short Bible story. You will have to plan this carefully if children are reading out loud in class. This can be embarrassing for some children and it does take time.

- Children in this age group can copy verses onto paper. These can be used in the classroom or taken home as reminders.
- Children aged 8-10 years are often able to confidently find a verse from a book, chapter, verse reference. A fun game is for the teacher to call out a reference (like Ephesians 6:1). The children then “race” to find the verse in their Bible and begin reading.

Pre-Teen (ages 11-12)



**Ages
11-12 Years
Pre-Teen**

- By the pre-teen years children can usually read a set of verses or a Bible story of reasonable length from the Bible.
- A teacher can challenge them to read a verse or set of verses and then:
 - Outline what they have read
 - Point out the most important words and/or
 - Name the characters and describe them based on what they have read.
- Also guide them to read a verse, group of verses or a Bible story and then describe:
 - What this reading reveals about God
 - How the pre-teen’s thoughts and feelings are affected by what they have read, and/or
 - What actions they might take based on what they have just read.

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Teaching Children to Pray

One of the most profound aspects of helping shape the spiritual lives of children is guiding them in talking to God.



Oh, Baby!



My Friend Jesus (6 Lessons)

After a long delay between lessons the "My Friend Jesus" series for Babies and Toddlers is now complete. Hopefully, it will help parents and teachers share the story of Jesus with little ones.

In this series infants and toddlers are introduced to Jesus and relate to him through various common experiences of childhood (celebration, helping, community, worship and growth). Role-play and sensory activities are used to express a growing relationship and friendship with him.

The first breath Jesus took on this earth was as a fragile newborn infant. The One who would save the world had to have his nappies/diapers changed. He learned to feed himself, crawl and walk. He experienced the human senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight and smell.

Infants and Toddlers can know that Jesus is special, experience affinity with Jesus through role-play and sensory activities. They can learn practices that express friendship, affection, obedience, respect and worship.

Lessons in this Series:

1. Cherished Baby

Expressing love through protection and tender care.

2. Time to Celebrate

The joy of giving, receiving and celebrating.

3. Helper at Home

Being part of a family by sharing responsibilities at home.

4. Worship and Praise

Being part of a community of worshipers.

5. Growing and Learning

The satisfaction of maturing and moving forward.

6. My Friend, Jesus

Comfort, love and affection in a relationship with Jesus.



My Friend Jesus
(6 Lessons)

[Download the complete set here.](#)

[Go to the "My Friend Jesus page on this website.](#)

Additional Infant and Toddler Lessons



God Created (6 Lessons)



God is With Me (6 Lessons)

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Touring Mission Bible Class

Here's a quick video tour of the features of the Mission Bible Class website. Please feel free to pass the link on to someone who teaches or wants to teach children about God.

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