Ages: 3-4 Years



Each of the 172 Bible Lessons on this website provides a selection of activities for children of various ages.

When choosing activities for three and four-year-olds, keep the following in mind:

Three and four-year-olds are absorbing a great deal of new knowledge and understanding. Children in this age group have a love of life and are curious and open to learning. They are able to have a simple trust in God. *More About Understanding Age Groups*

What Are Three and Four-Year-Olds Like?

- They enjoy pictures and being read to.
- They are acquiring new skills such as:
  - Learning to count and the letters of the alphabet.
  - Learning to use pitch and rhythm.
  - Working puzzles of increasing complexity.
  - Becoming coordinated and skilled in motor activities.
- Three and four-year-olds are curious and eager to learn. They are able to convey their thoughts and ideas through words.
- They have a healthy self-concept and enjoy talking about their accomplishments and abilities.
- Physical Characteristics:
  - Energetic and not able to sit still for long periods of time.
  - Children of this age are experiencing rapid growth. They are often energetic and constantly on the go, but they still need times of rest during the day.
- Even though three and four-year-olds are still fairly self-centred, they desire the attention and approval of others. They are beginning to develop friendships but tend to form small groups and exclude others.
- They are possessive, and sharing is still difficult.
- They are beginning to recognise right from wrong. They understand punishment and consequence, but the concept of a conscience is still difficult to understand.

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Learning Activities Three and Four-Year-Olds Enjoy

- Imaginary play, especially role-playing everyday tasks adults do (cleaning, cooking, washing the car, driving, etc.). Think of ways children can mimic what is happening in the Bible story you are teaching. For example, the Wise Men Followed a Star in the story of Jesus' birth, so hold up a picture of a star and let the children follow you. The lions roared in the story of Daniel and the Lions so let the children roar!
- Artistic expression through paint, crayons, playdoh, cutting and glueing. Instead of colouring sheets used repeatedly, provide blank paper and ask the children to draw something from the Bible story. You may be amazed at what they have learned.
- Singing Songs
- Praying. Younger children in this age group can repeat phrases after the teacher. Some three and four-year-olds might like to pray out loud by themselves.
- Sensory activities that relate to the Bible story you are teaching. For example, when learning about The Parable of the Lost Sheep, bring some lamb's wool for the children to feel. When teaching about Elisha and the Widow's Oil, bring some real olive oil to class so they can touch and even taste it.
- Constructing and demolishing things that relate to the story. A simple set of building blocks can be used over and over to construct houses, fences, palaces and altars. And while learning about the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders, it is lots of fun to make the house on the sand crash!

Teaching Tips

- Three and four-year-olds are not able to sit still for long periods of time, so teachers should allow time and space for movement between activities. For example, "Let's hop like bunnies to the mat to read our Bible story." Or make up a quick energy expender you can use whenever children get antsy- something like "Wiggle-wiggle-wiggle-God loves you! Wiggle-wiggle-wiggle-God loves me! Wiggle-wiggle-wiggle-let's sit down!"
- Since their concept of space is limited, providing clear physical boundaries helps them focus. A physical boundary might be everyone sitting at a table or on a mat. In a big room, you might put tape or a rope in a circle on the floor and ask everyone to sit inside the circle.
- Children of this age think literally and not figuratively. Teachers should use simple phrases instead of metaphors. For example, instead of saying, "Jesus is the Lamb of God," say, "Jesus is God's son, and He helps us."
- When sharing from the Bible, try to cover the main points in a simple way. Consider only covering part of lengthy or complex stories but be careful not to "dumb down" the stories. Give them ample, accurate knowledge about God. Three and four-year-olds are ready to accept all they are told about God and are able to have a simple trust in Him.

Relating to the Bible at This Age

- Three and four-year-olds 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. We just practice one word each week until the children have it down. They are so proud of themselves!
  - G-O-D
  - J-E-S-U-S

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- B-I-B-L-E (song)

Mission Bible Class Resources to Help You Teach

- How to Plan a Bible Class
- Songs Children Enjoy
- Teaching Ideas
- Quick List of Bible Stories and Suggested Themes

References and Other Helpful Online Resources

- The ABC's of Spiritual Growth
- How to Sing With Toddlers
- Pre-School Growth and Development
- Collection of Child Development Articles
- Child Development Information
- Play and Developmental Stages
- Power Point Slides about Age Characteristics

Help for Teaching Children of Various Ages

- Ages: 0-2 Years
- Ages: 3-4 Years
- Ages: 5-7 Years
- Ages: 8-10 Years
- Ages: 11-12 Years

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