

THE 3D SUNDAY SCHOOL

A Two-Hour Conference for Preschool Sunday School Teachers

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PREPARATION

1. Locate one of the following curriculum materials for display in your conference; *Bible Teaching for Kids Babies Leader Pack*, *Bible Teaching for Kids 1s & 2s Leader Guide*, *Bible Teaching for Kids 1s & 2s Learner Guide*, *Bible Teaching for Kids Babies, 1s & 2s Music CD-ROM*, *Bible Teaching for Kids 3s – Pre-K Leader Guide*, *Bible Teaching for Kids 3s – Pre-K Learner Guide*, *Bible Teaching for Kids 3s – Pre-K Leader Pack*, *Bible Teaching for Kids 3s – Pre-K Music CD-ROM*, *Bible Teaching for Kids Kindergarten Leader Guide*, *Bible Teaching for Kids Kindergarten Learner Guide*, *Bible Teaching for Kids Kindergarten Leader Pack*, *Bible Teaching for Kids Kindergarten Music CD-ROM*.
2. Display a copy of *ParentLife*, *BabyLife*, *HomeLife*, *StandFirm* and *Journey* magazines.
3. Display a copy of *Teaching Preschoolers: First Steps Toward Faith*.
4. Locate copies of Levels of Biblical Learning and Levels of Bible Skills for each conferee.
5. Place miniature pictures of children's toys, such as tricycles, blocks, balls, and so forth on the tables along with the curriculum displays.
6. Place colorful sheets of paper on the focal wall. Use large sheets of construction paper or colorful bulletin board paper. Find various pictures of children with families, at play or at church.
7. Prepare the words, *Invite*, *Discover*, and *Connect*, by cutting (or dye cut) individual letters. These letters will be placed in the center of the three groups at the beginning of the conference. Conferees will place these on the focal wall near the pictures of the children.
8. Place this phrase, from Dr. Rainer's book, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church*, page 47, on a poster: *We have known that Sunday School is a vital component of the past for American churches. Its history is almost as old as our nation itself. But more and more the research indicated that Sunday School is not only our past, it is our future as well.* Place the poster inside a large envelope (you may want to fold butcher paper around the poster like that of an envelope).
9. Duplicate "On Your Block" (item 1).
10. Make placards of these six "Ways to Find Prospects": (1) Churchwide Events, (2) Vacation Bible School, (3) Weekday Programs, (4) Sunday Morning Visitors, (5) Adult Sunday School Classes, (6) Expectant Parents. Place these six placards around the room on the wall. Put a tear sheet and marker beside each placard. Cover the placards until it is time to do the activity (Procedure 3). Duplicate "Six Ways to Find Prospects" (item 2).
11. Locate information on www.LifeWay.com/childhood related to LifeWay Prospect Discovery, First Contact, Contact 1-2-3.
12. Prepare the answer to this question: Why is Sunday School so important to preschoolers? Discuss the following as possible answers: We have something to offer preschoolers (birth through kindergarten), we have a mandate from God to teach His children (Deut. 6:5-9), and we must give the children a foundation from which to build an understanding of God and how they relate to Him.
13. Duplicate the "Understanding the Child?" (item 3).
14. Locate a bean bag.
15. Duplicate "Creating a Learning Environment" (item 4).
16. Prepare these group assignments:
 - Group 1.** Choose a session from the *Bible Teaching for Kids Babies*, and *Bible Teaching for Kids 1s & 2s*. Find a unit song and sing the song as you would sing it to the child on Sunday morning.
 - Group 2.** Choose a session from the *Bible Teaching for Kids 3s – Pre-K*. Prepare to tell the Bible Story and use one group time activity to reinforce the truth of the story.
 - Group 3.** Choose a session from *Bible Teaching for Kids Kindergarten*. Read one of the activities and role-play interacting with a child and share the Bible content or the Bible truth.
17. Place the group assignments in a bag along with the appropriate Bible Teaching for Kids curriculum guide.
18. Duplicate "Safety and Emergency Guidelines" (item 5). Place individual safety and emergency guidelines on small colorful cards and place them around the room.
19. Prepare large numerals 1, 2, and 3. Place the following words with a number: 1: Mail; 2: Telephone; 3: Visit. Provide three boxes (gift box size) and place a number on each box.
20. Locate items from various Bible Teaching for Kids curriculum leader packs that might be used to mail to family, an idea to share on the phone, and something that could be taken to the child on a visit. Note: Look at articles or helps found on the Music CD-ROM for additional items. Place these items in the appropriate boxes mention in preparation 18. Along with these items, place a marker and paper for recording their ideas. Place three large sheets of paper on the wall. Place the numerals 1, 2, and 3 on individual sheets. As the groups report, write their ideas on the large sheets.
21. Print item 7 (Tricycle). Enlarge the frame and wheels. Cut out each tricycle parts individually. Use this at the close of the conference.

PROCEDURES

1. Welcome (5 min.)

As conferees arrive, welcome them and instruct them to sit in one of the three circles of chairs. Play preschool music as they arrive.

2. Importance of Sunday School (10 min.)

Once conferees are seated, ask them to unscramble the words in each circle. When they have completed the words, ask them to place the words on the wall near the pictures of the children. Refer to the poster with the quote from Dr. Rainer's book. Say: **Let's open the envelope and see why Sunday School is so important. We must make the most of inviting families to church, teaching their children to discover God's love, and connecting people and families at church to accomplish the "Great Commission."**

3. On Your Block (15 min.)

Distribute copies of "On Your Block" (item 1). Instruct conferees to place the names of families on their block who do not go to church. Ask conferees if there are any families on their block who do go to church? State: **How do we locate prospects?** After a brief discussion, ask conferees to form six groups and go to one of the six areas listed on the wall (preparation 10). Instruct them to uncover the placard and begin discussing as a small group how this suggestion might be a great way to discover prospects for the Preschool division in their church. Encourage them to write their ideas on the tear sheet beside the placard.

4. Six Ways to Find Prospects (5 min.)

Distribute copies of "Six Ways to Find Prospects" (item 2). As conferees begin to discuss their way to find prospects, instruct them to write their ideas on the handout.

5. Discovery (5 min.)

Continue the discussion on prospect discovery by informing conferees of other opportunities. Discuss LifeWay Prospect Discovery (available through the LifeWay Book Store online). Inform conferees about Contact 1-2-3, and First Contact. Give a brief description of each ministry.

6. Importance of Sunday School for Preschoolers (10 min.)

Discuss the question: **Why is Sunday School so important to preschoolers?** Refer to the answers mentioned in Preparation 12.

7. Understanding Needs (10 min.)

When conferees have responded to the question, "Why is Sunday School so important to preschoolers?" say: **Here is one way to show a child you care.** Begin singing the song, "I Have a Good Friend." Sing the song and include the name of the conferees as you sing. Say: **One thing we need to understand is that the child wants to be with the teacher and wants to have a friendship with the teacher. As a result we need to understand what the child is like.** Distribute copies of "Understanding the Child" (item 3). Mention that each child needs a teacher who understands their needs and characteristics.

8. Improving Teaching Skills

Help teachers to improve their teaching skills. Say: **Here are some ways to improve how we teach preschoolers about God.** Mention singing, telling the Bible story, relaying a Bible truth, and interacting with the child through Bible teaching. Introduce the group assignments.

9. Group Assignments (15 min.)

Ask conferees to form three groups. Distribute the group assignments. Instruct conferees to begin work on their assignment. Provide a CD player for group 1.

When conferees have had time to complete their assignments, ask each group to role-play their assignment. Talk about the value of these teaching techniques and why they are important to the learning process for preschoolers. [15 minutes]

10. Creating the Learning Environment (15 min.)

Distribute "Creating the Learning Environment" (item 4). Ask conferees to remain in their groups. Ask the group to read over the handout and determine important parts of the physical, mental, social/emotional, and spiritual aspects of creating the learning environment. Discuss their answers and talk about the implications for the child. (Example: Do preschoolers have opportunity to touch and use the Bible? Implication: provide more than one Bible for the children in the room.)

11. Safety and Emergency Guidelines (10-15 min.)

Mention to conferees there is one more item related to creating the learning environment and that is safety and emergency guidelines. Ask conferees to get up and look around the room for some colorful cards. Find one or more cards per conferee (depending on the number of conferees you have). Ask conferees to return to their chairs. Begin discussing the different safety and emergency guidelines. Conclude the discussion by distributing "Safety and Emergency Guidelines" (item 5).

12. Connecting with Families

Begin discussing the ways we connect with families and the children we teach. Distribute the numbered boxes, 1, 2, & 3. Ask conferees to form three groups. (Change from previous groups to meet new people.) Distribute the boxes and ask conferees to think of additional ways we might connect with children and their families through the ministry of Contact 1-2-3. The items in the individual boxes are just a starting point. Allow conferees an opportunity to report. Ask three conferees to volunteer to record their answers on the large sheets (preparation 20).

13. Invite, Discover, Connect

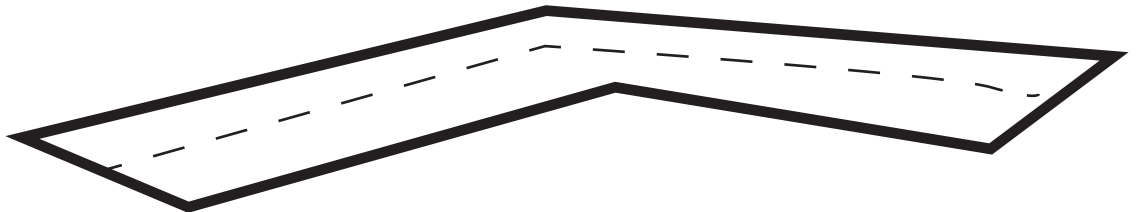
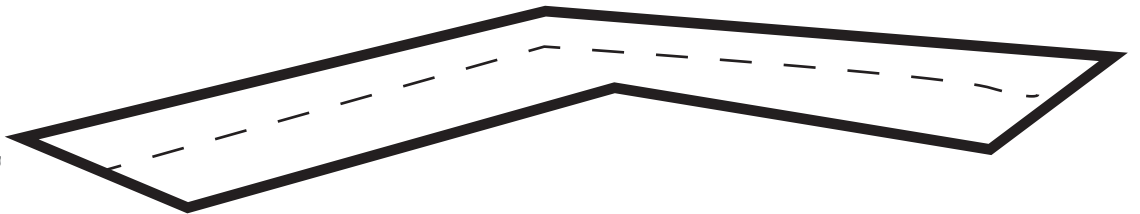
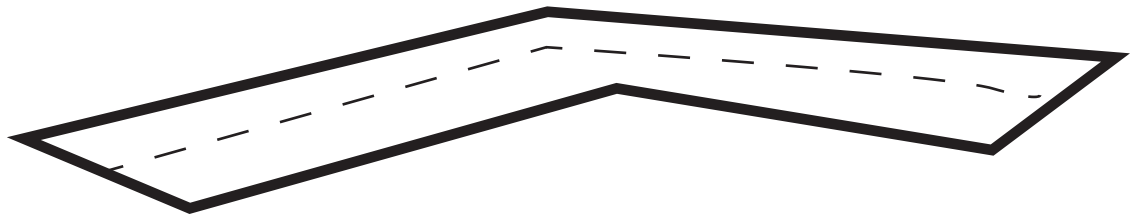
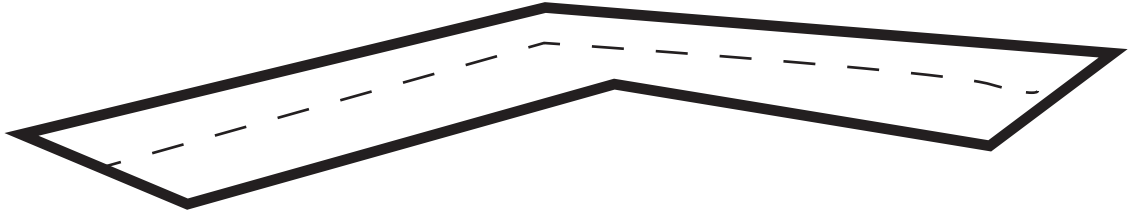
Conclude the conference by asking conferees to write an acrostic for *invite*, *discover*, and *connect*. Ask conferees to take the letters off the wall and actually write on the letters their word for that particular letter.

14. Close

Close by placing the tricycle together. Say: **When all the parts of the tricycle are working, the child has a smooth ride. But when one wheel is missing, it becomes impossible to navigate the tricycle. The same is true of Invite, Discover, and Connect. When we are working well in each area, our Sunday School class functions better ... for the child ... for the teacher ... and for the family.**

On Your Block . . .

Record the names of the people on your block who go to church.

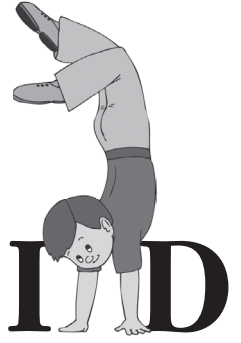


Six Ways to Find Prospects



1. Churchwide Events
2. VBS
3. Weekday programs
4. Sunday morning visitors
5. Adult Sunday School classes
6. Expectant parents

Understanding the CHILD



BASIC NEEDS

Love

Trust

Acceptance

Independence

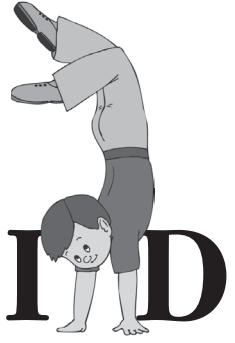
Freedom

Security

Guidance

A Sense of Accomplishment

Understanding the CHILD



BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Curious

Active

Creative

Self-centered

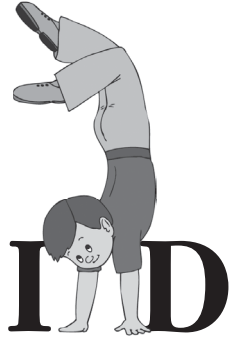
Sensitive

Limited Attention Span

Literal-minded

Explores Limits

Understanding the CHILD



WAYS PRESCHOOLERS LEARN

Play

Senses

Curiosity

Hands-on Experiences

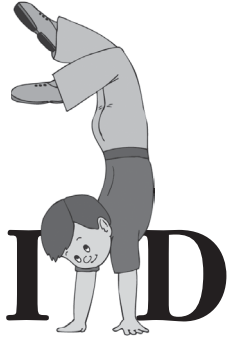
Relationships

Satisfaction

Imitation

Repetition

Understanding the CHILD



APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Verbal

Natural

Relational

Logical

Musical

Visual

Reflective

Physical



Creating a Learning Environment

Social/Emotional Environment

- Are children encouraged to work in the Bible-learning activity centers?
- Are children free to make choices in the Bible-learning activities they choose?
- Are children encouraged to engage in play with others?
- Do children and teachers interact in the Bible-learning centers?
- Do teachers encourage children to direct their own play using resources and materials in each center?
- Do teachers observe the actions of children as they participate in activities?
- Are children encouraged to use the Bibles in the room?
- Are children greeted warmly as they arrive?
- Do teachers sing the child's name in a song?
- Are children reassured when they are anxious?
- Do teachers meet the emotional needs of babies on demand?
- Are teachers ready when the first child arrives? (Come in time to set up and pray before the first child arrives.)

Physical Environment

- Is the room arranged in a way that allows teachers to see all the children as they play and work in Bible-learning centers?
- Are resources and materials safe for all children to use?
- Are equipment and resources checked frequently for safety?
- Are Bible-learning centers set up to use as soon as the first child arrives?
- Are teachers ready to interact with children in their assigned Bible-learning centers?
- Are resources accessible for each child (art, blocks, nature, books, Bible, homeliving, etc.)
- Are distractions (anything in the room that takes away from the Bible content) removed?
- Are loud activities and quiet activities separated in the room?
- Do teachers use Bible phrases/verses as children work in the Bible-learning centers?
- Are security procedures used by parents and teachers?
- Does group time take place in an open area of the room where children do not face the door or windows?
- Are toys and other teaching materials cleaned after each use and after each session? Are sinks cleaned on a regular basis?

Spiritual Environment

- Do you have more than one Bible in the room?
- Do teachers use prayer thoughts when appropriate? Are preschoolers encouraged to voice prayers during the session?
- Are children encouraged to recall a Bible verse or story when used in context to a Bible truth during the session?
- Do teachers use songs, Bible verses/phrases, and Bible conversation to introduce Bible truths as the children interact in the Bible-learning centers?
- Do teachers sing to children, using their names in the songs when appropriate?
- Are teachers consistent in their attendance to encourage boys and girls each Sunday?
- Do teachers encourage new Bible skills with Kindergartners (Old Testament/New Testament, etc.)?
- Do teachers play background music or use the preschool music CD during the session?

Mental

- Do teachers consider the learning needs of each child (using the activities suggested in the session to provide a variety of activities) as they plan?
- Are 3s–Pre-K and Kindergarten children encouraged to participate in group time learning? Do teachers utilize several choices to relay the Bible truth to preschoolers during group time?
- Are Bible truths relayed to the child in ways he can understand?
- Do teachers utilize activities so that they increase each child's understanding of God (using the Bible, Bible verses/phrases, songs and conversation, and the Bible story)?
- Do teachers consider the characteristics of children and the ways in which they learn to better plan the activities (and set up the activities)?
- Are Bible-learning centers set up to catch the attention and appeal to the children's senses?
- Are preschoolers encouraged as they learn new skills?
- Are take-home pages given to each child as they depart?
- Are parents given the *Early Bible Steps*, *Bible and Me*, or *Kindergarten Connection* articles at the beginning of each quarter?
- Do teachers relate the Bible truths to each child's life now?

Safety Policies



Safety in preschool rooms is important not only on Sundays, but anytime preschoolers are at church.

Keep this safety checklist as a guide:

1. Preschool rooms are located on ground level.
2. All equipment is designed for the age-group using the room.
 - All preschool equipment is free of sharp edges, broken parts, and chipped paint.
 - Cribs and mattresses in rooms for babies and ones meet national safety standards.
 - Crib rails are always raised to the highest setting when a child is in the crib. Rails may be partially lowered when a teacher is changing a diaper.
 - Small items which could cause choking are not used in preschool rooms.
 - Trash containers are kept out of reach of preschoolers.
3. Preschool windows have safety glass and are in good repair. Cords of window shades are out of reach of children.
4. Preschool doors meet the fire code requirements of your area. Doors have a small window in the door or beside the door to allow visibility to persons checking on the room.
5. Preschoolers may be left in preschool rooms only when designated adults are present. Keep an appropriate ratio of teachers to children, with always at least two adults in each preschool room.
6. Room temperatures are kept at a comfortable setting (72-74 degrees F). All heating and cooling units are inspected annually and are out of reach of children.
7. If a water source is available in the preschool room, the thermostat is set to avoid hot temperatures, which could be harmful to young children.
8. Rest rooms are adjoining or near the preschool room.
 - When a teacher must assist a child, the rest room door should be left partially open.
 - Remove locks from rest room doors to prevent young children from locking the door when alone in the rest room.
9. Remember unnecessary clutter is unattractive and unsafe. Remove items which are not used in the age-appropriate teaching activities.
10. All preschool teachers follow your church's security policies.
11. Keep all potentially poisonous substances out of preschool rooms.
 - Be aware of plants which could be poisonous if touched or ingested.
 - Avoid having cleaning products stored in preschool rooms.
12. Keep an information card on each child, including names of the child's parents and any allergies which the child may have.

Preschool Outreach Ideas



QUARTERLY HOME VISIT IDEAS

- Play dough in a snack bag for the child and her siblings. Enjoying playing with it together before you leave.
- Read a Bible story together from the Read To Me Bible (picture inserts).
- *Bag of popped popcorn.* “Popped by to see you and invite you to ‘pop’ in Sunday School this Sunday at 9:30 a.m.”
- Play a matching game with Bible pictures or work a puzzle together.
- *Face or hand painting.* Take a small brush, wet wipes and washable paint to paint a small heart, balloon or other simple shapes. Ask parents for permission first. Preschoolers will love it.

PHONE CALL IDEAS

- Read the Bible Story (Maximum one minute for every year of age)
- Sing a song together using the child’s name
- *Interaction.* Ask: What’s your favorite ice-cream flavor? Do you have pets?
- Encourage them to bring a smile to Sunday School and show everyone.

ANNUAL IDEAS

- Recognize their birthday with a card, phone call or visit. Include the birthdays of your visitors because it shows parents you care.
- *Big Heart Sunday* – mail paper heart shapes for preschoolers to return on a special day. Allow the children to glue the heart shapes to a poster or bulletin board. Other ideas might include flowers, snowflakes, leaves and sun shapes.
- Send special Christmas cards.

EVENT IDEAS FOR MEMBERS AND VISITORS

- *Preschool Rodeo.* Set a special day and time to allow preschoolers to enjoy rodeo events with stick horses. Run the barrels, retrieve rings with a wooden spoon, walk with big cowboy boots and log roll are just a few ideas. Enjoy oven baked s’mores and a drink.
- *Splash Party.* Choose a day for preschoolers to come enjoy water fun. Set up shallow pools to splash in and a small Slip ‘N Slide®. Set up several types of sprinklers and small tubs of water to soak sponges and other water toys. Have a place for parents to watch and talk. Take lots of pictures and serve Popsicles®.

PARENT IDEAS

- Always speak to the parents after greeting the child for Sunday School.
- When children depart, let the parent know something positive their child experienced or said that day.
- Send reminders of any parenting helps, books or meetings that come to your attention.
- Give *BabyLife* to expecting parents with a note about your preschool ministry.



Item 7:
Tricycle