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# TEACHER

— *creating conversational communities* —



## Childrens Leaders Conference Plans

**Purpose:** This conference plan details a two-hour conference experience for Kids Sunday School and small-group leaders. The goal is to provide an overview of the book *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community* and to apply its content to the Bible study setting of conference participants.

### Where?

- **Local church – Sunday School:** use this conference plan to train Childrens Bible study leaders prior to the start of a Sunday School year. Many churches use this conference plan on a Saturday morning or Sunday evening in mid-August.
- **Local church – small groups:** use this conference plan to train Childrens small-group leaders throughout the year prior to the start of new semesters of study.
- **Regional and state training** – use this conference plan to train Childrens Sunday School and small-group leaders at regional or state-wide events.

### With Whom?

- **With all leaders:** use this conference with Childrens leaders in attendance or with general officers.

## PREPARE

- Read *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community* by David Francis, Ken Braddy, and Michael Kelley.

### Collect the following resources for use during the training event:

- Nametags
- Copies of the *Levels of Biblical Learning* (006104390)
- Gift bags
- Index cards
- *Wholly Kids: Guiding Kids to Life in Christ* (005490111)
- Tear Sheets (1 for each group)
- Markers (1 for each group)
- 5 sheets of colorful heavy weight or construction paper
- Choose and prepare a Bible story to share with the group.
- 12 Envelopes
- Marbles (1 for every participant)

### Create the following visuals:

- Make a copy of the Handout 1, cut in half and provide one “smart phone” for each conferee expected.
- Print Item 1 (Teacher Quote) and mount on heavy weight or construction paper.
- Make copies of Item 2 (Levels of Biblical Learning assignment cards).
- Print Item 3 (Levels of Biblical Learning Icons), cut apart, and glue individual icons to index cards. Make three sets.
- From each age-level (younger kids, middle kids, preteens) print the first statement of each concept on to individual index cards.
- Place an assignment card (Item 2), a copy of the *Levels of Biblical Learning*, one set of Levels of Biblical Learning concept icons, and one of the age-level statement sets into a gift bag. Create three age-level bags (younger kids, middle kids, and preteens).
- On colorful heavy weight or construction paper print the following letters: S, A, Y, I, T for use as an acrostic.
- Draw a question mark on the front of 12 envelopes.
- Print the following words on separate index cards: *Closed, Limited, Open Ended*. Create four cards of each word (total of 12 printed cards). Place one card in a prepared “question marked” envelop (see previous step).

# PRESENT

## 1. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- Provide nametags for the conferees as they enter the room.
- Ask conferees to print their name on the nametag and think of something unusual/interesting about their name (examples: they were named after a relative, the origin of their name, nickname).
- Lead participants to share this information with another conferee.
- Add your “Welcome” and share the interesting fact about your name. Lead conferees to introduce the person they “just met” to someone else using the information found out about their name in the initial introduction.

## 2. MAKING BIBLE STUDY WITH KIDS GREAT

- Share the importance of having a great experience with children each Sunday. Explain that there are four parts to a good Bible study experience: **the teacher, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the kids**. Direct them to find the chart on page 10 in their copy of *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community*. Identify the source and general concept behind the Four Voices (see pages 9 and 10). Say, “Let’s look at these four parts a little closer.”

### THE TEACHER (15 minutes)

- Distribute Handout 1 (a smart phone) and lead conferees to remember a favorite teacher they had as a child and write a “text message” sharing a memory of something that teacher did that made them feel special, something they learned, or a characteristic of that teacher. (It can be a teacher from church, school, extra-curricular, etc.). Share a text message you’ve prepared and ask conferees to share their messages. Recognize the impact these teachers made on the conferees through their teaching and how they continue to impact the kids we’re teaching today.
- Show the prepared quote (Item 1) and lead in a discussion on the influence a teacher can have in the spiritual growth and development of a child. Emphasis the value relationships have on this influence.

### THE BIBLE (30 minutes)

- Introduce the *Levels of Biblical Learning* to conferees by showing the chart with a brief explanation. If possible, distribute copies of the document for every participant.
- Group conferees together in teams according to the age-level they teach: younger kids (typically 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> graders), middle kids (typically 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> graders), or Preteens (typically 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders). To each group give a prepared assignment bag. Instruct teams complete the assignment (found in the bag).

- Lead the group through each of the ten concepts (starting with God) by letting the Preteen group share their concept statement then working down through the concept to middle kids then younger kids. Emphasis that these concepts build upon the previous age-levels and the importance of each level. Continue in “chart order” through all 10 concepts.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT (5 minutes)**

- Read Matthew 28:19-20. Share an example of a time when you felt the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life/work/teaching. Emphasis that the Holy Spirit is always with us and is with us when we’re teaching boys and girls, too. Ask conferees to turn to the person beside them and say, “God is with you when you teach!” Lead a prayer thanking God for always being with us.

### **THE LEARNER (20 minutes)**

- Distribute copies of the Handout 2, “Learning Approaches.” Lead conferees to read through the handout and identify the approach (or approaches) that they feel best represent them. Using material found on pages 15-18 in *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community* and the resource *Wholly Kids: Guiding Kids to Life in Christ*, lead a discussion of the learning approaches. Emphasis the importance of every learner (kid) in our small groups, and because every kid is unique we valued and strategically teach to all eight of the approaches.
- Refer back to the age-level teams used previously. Lead teams to refer to the ten concepts in the Levels of Biblical Learning and choose one concept. As a team, list activities that could be used to teach that biblical concept to a child who prefers each of the eight learning approaches (each team will offer eight ideas (one for each approach) for the concept chosen). After 3-4 minutes allow each team to share.

## **3. SAY/ASK/DO**

- Briefly present an overview of Say/Ask/Do using ideas gleaned from Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community*. Say: *We will examine these three approaches individually.*

### **SAY IT (15 minutes)**

- State: *Sharing Bible stories with children is a key part of the Bible study experience. There are many different ways to “say it” with children.* Using the prepared visuals, share tips on how to tell a Bible story with children:
  - S Study the story
  - A Avoid too many details and remember to be age-appropriate
  - Y Your opening statement is important
  - I Involve the children as you tell the story
  - T Tell it out loud to yourself to prepare

- Tell the prepared Bible story being careful to observe the previous tips. Ask conferees for feedback from the story shared.

### **ASK IT (20 minutes)**

- State: *Asking good questions is vital to creating a stimulating learning atmosphere with children.* Explain that there are three types of questions and understanding the difference and how to use them is important:
  - Closed Questions: Questions that can be answered by yes or no. (Example: Did Jesus feed the multitude with a boys lunch?)
  - Limited Questions: Questions that have a right or wrong answer. (Example: What did Jesus feed the multitude?)
  - Open Ended Questions: Questions that explore thoughts and feelings. (Example: How do you think the boy felt when Jesus used his lunch to feed the multitude?)

Using the story that was shared previously, demonstrate the three types of questions.

Lead conferees to practice developing practicing questions. Allow conferees (or pairs/triplets of conferees) choose a prepared envelope, pull out the index card stating one of the question types, and prepare a question for the group using either the closed, limited, or open ended question that would apply to the Bible story shared previously.

### **DO IT (5 minutes)**

- State: *The true test of whether someone has learned the subject is whether there has been life change. Application is always a big part of learning and provides an opportunity for the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching session.* Lead the participants to discuss different ways teachers can help children apply the Bible story to their life.

## **4. CONCLUSION (5 minutes)**

- Lead conferees to form groups of three. Within the group assign each person either “Say,” “Ask,” or “Do.” Lead groups share with each other one thing they will do in with their small group from their assigned portion of the session (Say/Ask/Do) that they will use the next time they teach children.
- Remind conferees that one of the components of a great session is the Holy Spirit. Give them each a glass marble or pebble to carry with them. Encourage participants to reminder that He is with us wherever we go even in a kids Bible study group.
- Challenge conferees to read *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community* to gain a deeper understanding of the four voices and the three approaches.
- Close the session with prayer thanking God for the privilege of teaching boys and girls in small group Bible study.