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# TEACHER

— *creating conversational communities* —



## Preschool Leader Conference Plans

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

### Where to use this plan:

- **Local church – Sunday School:** use this conference plan to train Preschool 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 preschool 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 Preschool Sunday School and small-group leaders at regional or state-wide events.

### With Whom?

- **With preschool group leaders:** use this conference with preschool leaders.

## PREPARE

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

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

- ☐ One copy of *Teacher: Creating Conversational Community* by David Francis, Ken Braddy, and Michael Kelley for each participant. The book can be ordered at [www.LifeWay.com](http://www.LifeWay.com).
- ☐ Nametags for each participant (two each)
- ☐ Post-It® notepad (wall size)
- ☐ Markers

### Create the following visuals:

- ☐ Large chart of the Four Voices (see page 10 of *T:CCC*)
- ☐ Placards of the Eight Learning Approaches (see page 16 of *T:CCC*)

### Enlist the following volunteers:

- ☐ Volunteer to read “Teacher” on page 4 of *T:CCC*
- ☐ Volunteer to present mini-lecture defining a Conversational Community

### Prepare a display of the following resources:

- ☐ Samples of ongoing Bible study resources from LifeWay including Leader Guides, Kids Activity Pages, Leader Packs, and other resources specific to each product family like CDs and DVDs
  - Bible Studies For Life
  - Explore The Bible
  - The Gospel Project
- ☐ Samples of short-term Bible study resources
- ☐ Eight toys/manipulatives/resources that represent each one of the eight approaches to learning (these are examples; substitute items you have)
  - Toy microphone – Verbal learners
  - Story book – Reflective learner
  - Puzzle – Logical learner
  - Wrist bells – Musical learner
  - Plastic plate/spatula – Relational learner
  - Bean bag – Physical learner
  - Garden gloves – Natural learner
  - Teaching picture – Visual learner

**Prepare the room for the conference:**

- ☐ Arrange chairs so they form a semi-circle facing a focal wall
- ☐ Place a nametag, handouts, and copy of *T:CCC* on each chair
  - Handouts
    - Characteristics of Preschoolers
    - Preparing and Telling Bible Stories (Blank)

# PRESENT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- As participants arrive, direct them to create a nametag using the markers and nametag provided. Encourage them to write their first name (large and bold with a marker) AND their favorite nickname/moniker they have been or are called below their first name (large and bold.)
- After all participants have arrived, share with them your favorite nickname or moniker (Bubba, Papa, the Babe, etc.). Explain why that is your favorite nickname or moniker.
- Invite volunteers to briefly introduce themselves to the group using their favorite nickname or moniker. Encourage them to explain the significance of their nickname or moniker.
- Call on a pre-enlisted volunteer to read “Teacher” on page 4 of *Teacher: Creating Conversational Communities (T:CCC)*.
- Explain that Jesus was known by many names, but “Teacher” or “Rabbi” would have been one of the more common names used by His disciples and others.
- Present a summary of the first section of Chapter 1 of *T:CCC*. Emphasize the high privilege of being called “teacher.”
- Pray, asking God to bless your time together in the conference as He speaks to each person’s heart about what it takes to be a teacher.

## 2. Defining Success as a Teacher of Preschoolers

- Ask: *What is your goal as a teacher of preschoolers? What are you trying to accomplish in the lives of preschoolers and their families?*
- Direct the group to share with a partner their responses. Invite a few volunteers to share what their partner said. Affirm responses that relate to obedience or taking action on God’s truth.
- Highlight and discuss this verse and statements on page 52:
  - “But be doers of the word and not hearers only.” (James 1:22)
  - We must move people (preschoolers) to specific action points of obedience.
  - Leading people to obey must be the focus of every lesson
- Remind conferees that as the teacher, our goal is to help everyone on our ministry list (“class roll”) to become obedient followers of Christ and to continue to grow in obedience to Him.
- Explain that we began this conference with the end in mind so we could understand where we are trying to lead our group. The rest of this conference will focus on how we move group members from where they are to where they ought to be.

### 3. Definitions

#### Teacher

- Call for volunteers to share images that come to their mind when they hear the word “teacher.” Record the images on a large sheet of paper. Call attention to the second sentence in the bottom paragraph on page 5 (begins: We don’t mean a Bible expert...). Lead the group to identify the images listed that illustrate the description given on page 5 (“What is not meant...”).
- Write “Lead Learner” on a large sheet of paper. Lead the group to discuss how viewing one’s self as the lead learner would impact how a person teaches a group. If the group is large, direct them to discuss in groups of 2 to 4.
- Wrap up this topic by reminding the conferees that “To teach is to learn twice: once when you prepare and once while you teach.”

#### Conversational Community

- Call on a pre-enlisted volunteer to present a mini-lecture defining a conversational community using the information on pages 6-8.
- Help the group understand how conversational community applies to preschool classrooms. *Talk about “Bible-story conversation.”* Help preschool leaders understand that Bible-story conversation begins at the classroom doorway the moment a child arrives. Bible-story conversation continues throughout all Bible-learning activities and learning centers. Bible-story conversation permeates the group time experience for older twos through Kindergarten. Consider role modeling the reception of a child at the classroom doorway utilizing Bible-story conversation. Ask the group for examples of how we use Bible-story conversation during a learning activity.
- Point out that the authors identify two obstacles that work against a conversational community. Direct the group to scan page 9 to discover those obstacles. Challenge the group to consider ways of removing and tearing down any obstacles that hinder a group from becoming a conversational community.

### 4. Voices

- Reveal a chart you have created of the “Four Voices” on page 10. Direct the participants to find the chart on page 10 in their copy of *T:CCC*. Identify the source and general concept behind the Four Voices (see pages 9 and 10).

#### The Bible

- Emphasize the importance of the Bible. Emphasize that the Bible is the central voice in a conversational community. Talk about placing Bibles in all learning areas of the preschool classroom.

- Explain that the Bible speaks to all age-groups but does so in different ways. Use the chart on page 12 to illustrate. Lead a discussion on ways the Bible is actually used during a preschool session.

### **The Holy Spirit**

- Call attention to the statement “You are not the only Teacher in the room.” on page 14.
- Ask: *How does knowing that the Holy Spirit is with you every step of the teaching process give you confidence as a teacher?*

### **The Learners**

- Invite participants to call out characteristics of the group they teach or will be teaching. Utilize the handout “Characteristics of Preschoolers” to lead the discussion.
- Display eight placards with the names of each learning approach (one name per placard). Point to the “Eight Learning Approaches” chart on page 16 of *T:CCC*. Place the placards around the room. Ask each leader to go and stand by their preferred approach to learning. Caution leaders that their tendency will be to use learning approaches that match their own. Challenge them to stretch themselves and use a variety of the learning approaches. Explain that if a person teaches mostly using only one of these, they are leaving the majority of their class or group out of the teaching-learning process.
- Show preschool leaders the eight toys/manipulatives/resources that you have brought. Challenge the group to match each item to one of the approaches to learning.
  - Option: call attention to the email on pages 18-19 of *T:CCC*. Lead the group to identify general principles they see followed by Shelley. Ask: *How can you take these actions and apply them to your age group?*

### **The Teacher**

- Remind participants of the definition of a teacher (lead learner). State: *The fourth voice present is ours.*
- Present a mini-lecture to introduce the Say/Ask/Do concept (see pages 21-23). Explain that the remainder of the conference will focus on this concept.

## **5. Say/Ask/Do**

- Place participants into three teams (an individual can be a team). Assign each team Chapter 2, 3, and 4. Give the following instructions:
 

Review your assigned chapter. Identify key points and insights. Use the approach in the assigned chapter title to communicate the key points and insights to the rest of the conferees.
- Allow the groups to work, making yourself available to the groups to clarify as needed. You may want to provide some snacks while each team completes the assignment.
- After allowing time for the teams to work, reassemble the participants.

## Say

- Invite the Say team to lead the participants in gaining an understanding of Chapter 2.
- Affirm them for sharing
- Highlight any points in Chapter 2 that may have been overlooked by the team, but you believe to be.
- Walk conferees through the handout “Preparing and Telling Bible Stories.” Pass out the sheets on which appear the answers for the fill-in-the-blank handout. Expand on any of the statements as needed during the discussion.

## Ask

- Invite the Ask team to lead the participants in gaining an understanding of Chapter 3.
- Affirm them for sharing
- Allow the other participants to ask questions for clarification.
- Introduce to the group the idea of always using “open-ended questions” with preschoolers. Explain how this helps the teachers really understand better what a child “gets” and “doesn’t get!”

## Do

- Invite the Do team to lead the participants in gaining an understanding of Chapter 4.
- Affirm them for sharing
- Allow the other participants to ask questions for clarification.
- Challenge the group to list on a large sheet of paper types of “do’s” that we can lead preschoolers to experience.

## Say/Ask/Do or Do/Ask/Say?

- Call attention to the next to the last paragraph on page 23 (They are right! Vicki and I...). Note that David calls for using these three elements in a different order when teaching 4-5 year olds.
- Invite volunteers to share as time allows. Remind participants of the importance of utilizing all three approaches regardless of the order.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- Direct participants to skim *T:CCC* and mark pages they need to review and give further consideration. Invite volunteers to share one insight or tip they gained from the conference.
- Distribute another name tag to each participant. Lead them to write their first name and “Teacher” on the nametag.

- Present an overview of the “Teacher” on page 58. Emphasize the privilege and joy of being called “teacher.”
- Thank participants for their willingness to serve as a teacher.
- Close the conference by praying for the participants. Thank God for allowing teachers to be instruments used by Him to facilitate spiritual transformation.
- Dismiss