
BACK-TO-SUNDAY-SCHOOL



Teaching Kids to Know Nothing but Christ

Big Truth Bible Lessons for Kids

In 1 Corinthians 2:2, Paul says “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (ESV)

Let those words sink in for a minute. What does it mean to know nothing except Jesus Christ? Take just a minute to stop and take inventory of your thoughts for the last 60 seconds. If we’re honest, most of what we “know” in this moment is far from Christ. I’ve just had thoughts of wasted time as an appointment is late, wondering how I let my tea get cold, thoughts of who to recruit for an upcoming kids event and making mental notes of what needs to be next on my to-do list. In these past moments have I known nothing but Christ? All (or most) of those thoughts could be turned to Christ, but in reality they were mainly about me.

Back to the text... “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (ESV) This was how Paul lived, this is how each of us as believers should live and this should be our clear vision for the limited time we have with the children in our ministry at church. As children’s ministry volunteers and leaders around the world, let’s commit to one another in this calling....to make the hour or two a week we have with the children in our church about nothing more than Christ and Him crucified.

Spurgeon was once quoted, talking about John Bunyan, as saying, “Why, this man is a living Bible! Prick him anywhere — his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is.” Oh that the same would be said of you and I, that when kids think of us they think of the living Word of God. We, as children’s ministry leaders, should bleed the gospel. Every thought, every word, every action should point children to the cross, instead of to the mundane distractions of this world.

Let’s just take a few minutes to consider how we might apply that truth in our teaching and ministry each week. How can we practically make Christ and the cross central in our ministry to the children this week?

Here are just a few thoughts....

1. What Children See – The rooms and environments we teach in should portray Christ. If you look around, do you see anything that hinders children from seeing the cross? Are you intentional about the toys and books and puzzles that you have in your classroom? We don't want children to see anything while they are with us that would point them to anything other than Jesus. This could be everything from the permanent decorations in your classroom to the teaching materials, toys and supplies you bring in each week. As you evaluate everything (even toddler toys), ask yourself how this item would point a child to Jesus. Maybe consider keeping your toys simple and limited to blocks, dolls, food & cars. Blocks can be the ark when you're learning about Noah, the tower of Babel, the city of Jericho, a mountain, a city, a cross and so many other things. In everything they see in the classroom, we want children to see Christ.

2. What Children Hear – Other than the obvious proclamation of the truth through the lesson, this should come across in two key areas.... (a) the songs we sing and (b) the conversations we have. When choosing songs, it's helpful to ask yourself what the message of the song is. Ask if this song is mainly about God or mainly about me. Even songs for the youngest children should be chosen based on their gospel content. With young toddlers you can sing something like "Jesus died on the cross, on the cross, on the cross. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin." (to the tune of 'Mary had a Little Lamb.') With older children, choose songs that are full of theological meat. We want every song we sing to point children to the truth of their sinfulness and Jesus' death in their place. Other children's songs can be fun, but they aren't why we're here. As we think of conversations, our goal should always be to point children back to the cross.

Some of the ways you might see this happen are

- Retelling the story or asking review questions while 5-6 year olds are drawing a picture, making sure not to waste any precious moments.
- When 10-11 year olds ask difficult questions, and you answer them with the Word (actually looking up and reading verses) instead of just worldly wisdom.
- Something as simple as having 1 year olds repeat Bible truth. As you hand toddlers a cookie, you can say Thank You God for my snack, God takes care of us, God loves us.
- Gospel conversations also happen when you repeat truths over and over with 3-4 year olds. This summer when I was teaching that age group I remember one week where there were 4 things to glue on a page for a craft. With each one I went around the circle, handing them the piece and asking repeated questions. While glueing the cross it was – who died on the cross? where did Jesus die? why did Jesus die on the cross?, repeated over and over. No matter the age group, you should be looking for opportunities to weave gospel conversations into the time you have with children.

3. During Times of Discipline – No one likes to deal with discipline in the classroom, but when children behave poorly we are given the perfect opportunity to talk about the gospel.

- We can ask them why they did what they did. Usually they'll say they don't know what made them do it. At that point you can say something like, 'I know why you hit your friend. It's called sin. The Bible tells us that we are all sinners. This means that our hearts are sick and we do things that we know are wrong.'
- We can ask them what the consequence should be for their behavior. Most children will admit that they should be punished. You can talk about the punishment (sitting in time out, or telling their parents), then say something like, 'The Bible tells us that we deserve to be punished for breaking God's law. We all deserve punishment, because we are all sinners. Thankfully the Bible also tells us about Jesus. Jesus came to earth and took the punishment that we deserved. Jesus died on the cross in our place. Jesus died to pay for our sin.'" There can also be times that you can talk about the grace shown to us through Christ and choose not to continue with the consequence and other times when the consequence is still warranted.
- With older children, times of discipline can be a great opportunity to talk about repentance and forgiveness. You can help kids see that because of sin we all need salvation and that salvation is only possible through Jesus.

4. During Times of Prayer – Prayer time is a great opportunity to point kids to Jesus. Children will often ask us to pray for certain things. With older kids, we can use their prayer requests to teach on the character of God. If they ask prayer for a sick family member for example, you can ask if this person knows Jesus. You can then pray for their physical healing, and you can also pray that they would trust in the sovereign God. You can pray that this sickness will help them to grow closer to God. This is also a great time for them to hear you praying and see prayer modeled and is also a good time for you to direct their prayer. We can use pray time to teach children to praise God and not just give a list of requests. In classes with little ones (babies and 1 year olds), you can pray over them while you are comforting them when they're upset so they can hear truth proclaimed.

The point to remember through each of these is that everything we do in children's ministry from planning to teaching and every word and moment in between should help children to see, hear and understand the gospel and their need for salvation through Christ alone.

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