



52 Bible Lessons for Ages 4-6 Kathy Downs



▼ About the Author ▲

Kathy Downs, the wife of a minister and the mother of three children, has worked with children for more than thirty years. She has taught in public and Christian schools, written curriculum and children's books, and is currently teaching first grade in a Christian school in Arizona. She feels that all children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Thus active learning was the foundation for creating this curriculum.

▼ Dedication ▲

To my special friend and prayer partner, Jennie Porter, for praying with me and for me during the writing of this book, and for the many hours she spent proofreading and encouraging me.

This book is a revision of *The Bible Teaches Me* (42034).

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Introduction

There are many things in this world influencing children (and adults). The most influential are people. Many young children want to grow up to be just like daddy, mommy, a certain community helper, a special teacher, a movie star, or a sports hero. Some of these people might be good influences, but many are not. Where can a child go to find a hero worth modeling? The Bible. Its pages are filled with people who encountered the same struggles children are facing, or will face as they mature. Through the lives of Bible heroes, children can see God's goodness, love, and guidance.

In a generation that is struggling to find some purpose in life, only God's Word can provide direction. David said, "Your word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my way" (Psalm 119:105). Only God shines the true light for us to follow. Many people in the Bible found this to be true and followed His light. These are the people who should be the role models and heroes for children (and adults).

Each unit in this curriculum features ordinary people empowered by God to do extraordinary things. Half of the units are from the Old Testament and half are from the New Testament, with special lessons for Christmas and Easter.

What's Unique About *Explore Bible People?*It is designed to actively involve children in the learning process.

Preschool children use all five senses to explore and discover information. Children at this age are wiggly, noisy, touchy, feely, animated beings. You teach them according to the way God made them. You provide wiggle and noisy times. You give them objects to touch, feel, and even taste. All activities must be lively and fun. These small people have a huge desire for adventure. The goal of each lesson is to direct the children's five senses to that teachable moment when their minds say, "We understand!"

There are no worksheets in this book. Instead you will find lots of suggested movement, things to create, games to play, songs to sing, and fun foods to taste.

The lesson plans are perforated so they can be removed from the book and photocopied.

Everything you need is printed on pull-out pages. Make enough copies for each leader to have a set. A brief planning session is all you need for team teaching. Each leader then plans and prepares his or her own section. All leaders help the assigned leader. Even if you teach alone, the four-step lesson plan will help you stay on track. There will be times when you will need extra hands. Consider involving parents whenever possible.

Reproducible pages follow the lesson plans.

Visuals, crafts, and games are printed on reproducible

pages. No extra purchases are required. Photocopy a few or many. Use year after year.

The materials are non-consumable, so originals can be filed and reused.

Set up a filing system. Use thirteen folders for filing the units, or make a file for each lesson. As you prepare, store any reproduced material in the appropriate folder. After a lesson is taught, drop the lesson plans and any leftover materials in the folder.

You will be asked to make overhead projector transparencies for Units 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11. The transparencies will be used to provide background scenery for dramas, shadow stories, and a mural. Two of them are for teaching sign language. Be sure to save these transparencies for future use.

How is *Explore Bible People* Organized?

Each unit deals with an aspect of everyday life. The goals are expressed in three aims—Know (knowledge), Feel (attitudes and feelings), and Do (action). Knowledge is direction for the mind. New attitudes and feelings develop and mature in the heart. The end result is to take action directed by the mind and the heart.

Each lesson involves the children in activities that accomplish the unit and lesson goals. The amount of time needed to complete each activity will vary according to the age of the children in the class and the number of children doing the activity at one time.

Step 1, "What is this story about?" provides foundational activities on which to build the lesson's theme. Sometimes these activities impart knowledge and other times they explore attitudes. These activities may sometimes be used as centers, operating at the same time, allowing children choices.

Step 2, "What does the Bible say?" examines a person who was empowered by God to think and act in extraordinary ways. Directions for visuals are given at the beginning of each story. It will be important to provide these. Four-, five-, and six-year-olds need visual help to enhance auditory input. This step also includes a story review activity and a Bible memory activity.

Step 3, "What does this mean to me?" will help the children make a direct connection between the Bible person's response to God's will and their own possible responses.

Step 4, "What can I do to please God?" provides an opportunity for each child to respond to the lesson. This step may also include wrap-up activities to clean the room and sum up.

Each unit contains a song written especially for that unit's theme and goals. The tunes are familiar children's songs. The words are simple and easy to memorize. Use these songs to put the message from the Bible into the hearts of children. When it is in their hearts, they can deliver it to friends and family.

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	Unit Title	Scripture	Application	Memory Verse
Unit 1	Learning That I Am Special	Genesis 37 (Joseph's dreams) Genesis 37 (Joseph's brothers) Genesis 39–41 (Joseph's special job) Genesis 41–43 (Joseph's family comes)	Praise God for creating us special; show love to others and be a good worker.	Psalm 139:14 "I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way."
Unit 2	Learning to Trust God	Judges 6 (God chooses Gideon) Judges 6 (Gideon learns to trust) Judges 7 (Gideon obeys God) Judges 7 (trusting God to win)	Trust in God when afraid; worship God with songs and prayers.	Proverbs 3:5 "Trust the Lord with all your heart."
Unit 3	Learning to Do What Is Right	Nehemiah 1, 2 (asking God for help) Nehemiah 2 (asking others to help) Nehemiah 3, 4, 6 (doing right) Nehemiah 8 (thanking God)	Pray before making decisions; ask God for help to do right.	Deuteronomy 6:18 "Do what the Lord says is good and right. Then things will go well for you."
Unit 4	Learning to Be Brave	Esther 2 (Esther becomes queen) Esther 3, 4 (in danger) Esther 5, 7 (Esther is brave) Esther 8 (saving God's people) Esther 9 (celebrate Purim)	Choose to be brave when afraid.	Genesis 28:15 "I am with you, and I will protect you everywhere you go."
Unit 5	Learning to Pray Always	Daniel 1 (refuses king's food) Daniel 6 (Daniel prays) Daniel 6 (in danger) Daniel 6 (Daniel saved)	Choose to pray any- time and anywhere.	Psalm 17:6 "I call to you, God, and you answer me."
Unit 6	Learning to Obey God	Jonah 1 (disobeyed) Jonah 1, 2 (listened) Jonah 3 (to Nineveh) Jonah 4 (taught to love)	Choose to listen to and obey God.	Jeremiah 26:13 "You must start doing good things. You must obey the Lord your God."
Unit 7	Learning to Love	Matthew 19; Mark 10; Luke 18 (Jesus loves the children) John 11 (Mary, Martha, Lazarus) John 12 (Mary loves Jesus) John 13 (Jesus loves his friends)	Choose to show love for Jesus and others.	1 John 3:18 "We should showlove by what we do."

	Unit Title	Scripture	Application	Memory Verse
Unit 8	Learning to Be Happy	Luke 15; Psalm 23 (happy shepherd) Luke 15 (happy woman) Luke 15 (happy father) John 14; Revelation 1, 2, 4, 5, 21, 22 (happy forever)	Tell others about the happiness God gives.	James 5:13 "If one of you is having troubles, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should sing praises."
Unit 9	Learning to Be Thankful	Luke 2 (Simeon and Anna thank God) Matthew 6; Psalm 136 (thanks for food, clothes) Acts 3, 4 (thanks for healthy bodies) Luke 17 (man with leprosy thanks)	Say thank-you to God.	Psalm 136:1 "Give thanks to the Lord because he is good. His love continues forever."
Unit 10	Learning to Share	Matthew 14; John 6 (a boy shares) Luke 20, 21 (a woman shares) Matthew 28; Acts 1, 2, 4 (the church shares) Acts 18; Romans 16 (Aquila and Priscilla share)	Share joyfully with others.	Hebrews 13:16 "Do not forget to do good to others. And share with them what you have."
Unit 11	Learning to Help Others	Mark 5 (Jesus heals a girl) Mark 2 (four friends help) Mark 4 (Jesus helps his friends) Luke 10 (a Samaritan helps) Acts 9 (Dorcas helps others)	Be helpful to family, friends, and others.	Luke 6:31 "Do for other people what you want them to do for you."
Unit 12	Learning to Follow Jesus	Luke 19 (Zacchaeus gives) Luke 22; John 21 (Peter is sorry) Acts 16 (Philippian jailer) Philemon (Onesimus)	Make right choices.	1 Peter 2:21 "Christ gave you an example to follow. So you should do as he did."
Unit 13	Learning to Worship Jesus	Genesis 3; Luke 2; Matthew 2 (Jesus is born) Matthew 28; Mark 16 (Jesus is alive)	Tell others about Jesus, choose to worship Jesus.	John 3:16 "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."

UNIT 1

Learning That I Am Special

Lessons 1-4



Unit Bible Words

"I praise you because you made me [in an amazing and wonderful way]" (Psalm 139:14).

(Note: This verse has been divided into two parts. If you are teaching four-year-olds, use only the first part. If you are teaching older children, also include the part of the verse in brackets.)

Bible Character

loseph

1 Joseph Dreams That He Is Special

Genesis 37:1-11—Jealousy and anger are kindled in the hearts of Joseph's brothers as God begins to reveal His special plan for Joseph. The children will begin learning about how uniquely they were created.

2 Joseph's Brothers Are Jealous

Genesis 37:4, 8, 11-36—God's plan for Joseph begins to unfold when his jealous brothers finally succeed in getting rid of him. The children will learn the importance of working together as a family.

3 Joseph Is Given a Special Job

Genesis 39–41—Everywhere Joseph goes, God's blessing is upon the household or the situation. Joseph is a good worker, and God takes care of him. The children will learn God is always with them, helping them to do their best.

4 Joseph Is Special

Genesis 41:56, 57; 42; 43—Finally God reveals to Joseph and his brothers that indeed he is special. He had been given the job of saving his entire family and the nation of Egypt from starving to death. The children will learn the importance of having a loving heart.

By the end of this unit, the children and leaders will

Know: A Bible person whom God chose for a very special job.

Feel: That God made people in a special way and has a plan for their lives. **Do:** Praise God for creating people special by showing love to others and being good workers.

Why Teach This Unit to Four- to Six-Year-Olds?

All people have a basic need to feel good about themselves. Children develop their sense of self-worth based on the way others see them and treat them. Unfortunately, adults sometimes treat children with disrespect, and other children can be extremely cruel. You can help the children in your classroom to understand that they are created by God, and are pleasing to Him. Didn't God use the words "very good" to describe how He felt at the end of the sixth day when He created man and woman?

Four-, five-, and six-year-olds are beginning to have experiences outside the home. They are interacting with peers and adults. They need positive experiences that will help them form positive opinions of themselves, so that they will behave in a positive manner toward others. Negative experiences will only cause them to build defensive walls.

Use this unit to create an environment where the basic needs of children are met. In this environment, affirm each child as a special creation of God. Remind them they are loved and valued by God, by their families, and by you. Encourage them to try new things such as meeting new friends, eating new foods, and participating in new activities. Listen to their stories. Laugh at their jokes. Praise them sincerely and love them dearly.

Meet Joseph

Joseph was second to the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons. Even though his birth order position in the family was low, he was his father's favorite son. Jacob honored Joseph by presenting him with a beautiful coat, the kind men of high position wore. From then on his brothers' hearts were filled with jealousy toward him.

Joseph was also a person who was special in the eyes of his heavenly Father. While Joseph was still a teenager, God began preparing him for a very important job. Joseph eventually saved an entire nation and his own family from starvation, but he had to endure his jealous brothers, deep pits, slavery, betrayal, and prison before he achieved that position of power. Through it all Joseph believed he was special. God repeatedly showed him how unique he was.

When children hear the story of Joseph, they will learn about a powerful God who loves and cares for each person He has created. They will learn they are very special—just the way they are!

Unit Songs

The Lord Made Me

(Tune: "This Is the Day")

Verse 1

These are my arms, these are my arms that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made. I'll praise the Lord, I'll praise the Lord for my arms that wave, for my arms that wave. These are my arms that the Lord has made; I'll praise the Lord for my arms that wave. These are my arms, these are my arms that the Lord has made.

Use these phrases for additional verses, or make up your own:

These are my legs that the Lord has made.
I'll praise the Lord for my legs that run.
(Use "bend" for children with disabilities, or sing about other attributes.)

These are my eyes for my eyes that see.

These are my ears for my ears that hear.

This is my tongue for a tongue that tastes.

This Is My Job

(Tune: "This Is the Day")

Verse 1

This is my job, this is my job,
I can pick up toys, I can pick up toys.
This is my job, this is my job,
I can do it well, I can do it well.
This is my job, I can pick up toys;
This is my job, I can do it well.
This is my job, this is my job,
I can do it well.

For other verses use these jobs: I can sweep the floor.
I can wipe and dust.
I can wash the car.
I can rake the yard.
I can take out trash.
I can feed the dog.
I can make my bed.

Joseph Dreams That He Is Special

LESSON

Genesis 37:1-11

■ 1. What Is This Story About? ■

Families Count

You will need pink and blue chenille wires for every child.

Help each child make a wire figure for each person (parents and children) in his family. (Make some figures ahead of time if your class is mostly four-year-olds.) Make blue figures for boys and pink for girls.

Gather all the blue figures in a pile and count them. Do the same for the pink ones. Ask, Are there more girls or more boys? From the blue pile, pick out the correct number of boys in your family, including your father. From the pink pile, pick out the correct number of girls in your family, including your mother. Whose family has the most boys? The most girls? Now let's each make a pile for the number of children in your family who are old enough to go to school. Let's count them. If you have time, continue to name special groups and count them. As you play, talk about families. I am glad that God gave each of us a family. Let's pray for our families and thank God for them. Lead the children in prayer.

Joseph and Me

You will need the words to "The Lord Made Me" from p. 10, two copies of the jointed figure from p. 25 for each child, scissors, crayons and markers, thirteen paper fasteners per child, glue, and scraps of cloth.

Cut out the pieces for the jointed figures before the session. *Note: save this art for use again in Unit* 9.

Have the children join the arms and legs of the two cutouts with paper fasteners. Then have them draw their own face on one figure and the face of Joseph on the other figure. Scraps of cloth can be glued on the figures for clothing. Join one hand of the Joseph figure to the hand of the child's figure with a paper fastener.

God made your body and Joseph's body in an amazing way. He had a special plan for Joseph when he grew up and He has a special plan for you.

Sing "The Lord Made Me," using the figures to demonstrate the waving and running actions.

2. What Does the Bible Say?

Bible Story: Joseph the Dreamer

You will need a sample of the jointed figure of Joseph from p. 25 (see the activity "Joseph and Me," above), a coat for Joseph made of construction paper or cloth, and four plain white paper plates.

On the first plate, draw twelve faces. On the second plate, draw a colorful long-sleeved coat. On the third plate, draw a bundle of wheat standing up. On the fourth plate, draw a stick person in the center and place eleven stars, the sun and the moon circling the figure.

Say, Jacob was the father of a big family. He had twelve sons. (Show the

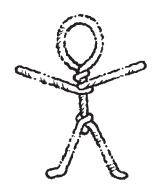
Know: A Bible person whom God chose for a very special job.

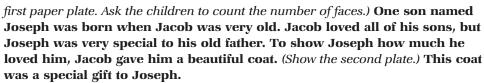
Feel: That God made people in a special way and has a plan for their lives.

Do: Praise God for creating people special by showing love to others and being good workers.

Children will accomplish the goals when they

- Tell about their families.
- Describe Joseph's dreams and tell how his family felt about them.
- Begin to memorize Psalm 139:14.
- Name ways they are special to God.
- Praise God for creating them.





Do you think the other sons were happy that Joseph had been given such a pretty coat? No, they were mad! They grumbled, "That is not fair!" The brothers said many unkind things about their younger brother, Joseph.

One night Joseph had a dream. (Show third plate.) In his dream Joseph and his brothers were in a field tying up bundles of wheat. Joseph's bundle of wheat stood in the center and the brothers' bundles gathered around. The brothers' bundles did an unusual thing. They bowed down to Joseph's bundle.

The next morning Joseph told his brothers about the dream. He said, "Your bundles of wheat bowed down to my bundle of wheat." When the brothers heard this, they angrily said, "Do you think you are going to be a king and be in charge of us?"

Joseph had another dream. (Show fourth plate.) In this dream eleven stars, the sun, and the moon bowed down to him. Joseph again told his family about this dream. Even his father scolded him saying, "Do you think your mother, your brothers, and I will bow down to you?"

(Show third and fourth plates.) These dreams made the brothers more jealous. But Jacob, his father, tried to figure out what they meant.

The dreams were part of God's special plan for Joseph. We will find out later what that plan was.

Story Review: Stars and More Stars

You will need star-shaped cereal or graham crackers, and wheat crackers. (If star-shaped cereal or graham crackers are not available, use a star cookie cutter to cut wheat bread and spread with margarine.)

Explain to the children that the snacks remind us of Joseph's dream: the stars in the sky and the bundles of wheat.

Offer a prayer for the snack. As the children eat the star-shaped snack and the wheat crackers, review the Bible story. Use the following questions:

How many sons did Jacob have?

What was the name of Jacob's favorite son?

What kind of gift did Jacob give Joseph?

What happened in Joseph's first dream?

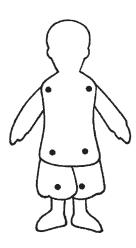
What happened in his second dream?

What did his family think about his dreams?

Bible Memory: Amazing Rhythm

Have the children sit on the floor in pairs, facing each other. Teach the rhythm in the right-hand column on p. 10 using the Bible words for this unit. Use the actions to pat your knees, clap your hands, and slap ("high five") your partner's hands.

We know that God made us because the Bible tells us He did. When God made Joseph, He had a special plan for him. When God made you, He had a special plan, too. As you grow, God will show you what His special plan is.



Bible Words

"I praise you because you made me [in an amazing and wonderful way]" (Psalm 139:14).

(Note: This verse has been divided into two parts. If you are teaching four-year-olds, use only the first part. If you are teaching older children, also include the part of the verse in brackets.)



God Has a Special Plan for You

God has a special plan for you. Part of His plan is for your body to grow bigger and stronger, and for you to learn to do more and more things. Ever since the day you were born, your body has been following God's plan. You do not remember learning to crawl and walk, but you have seen babies learning to crawl and walk. Ask a couple of children to demonstrate how babies crawl and learn to walk. As you continue the discussion, ask children to demonstrate their abilities. Now you can walk, jump, and run. You can also talk very well, but when you were younger you could not talk very well. When you were one and two years old, you learned to say and understand new words every day. What were some of the first words you learned to say?

Do you remember learning to ride a tricycle? Who helped you learn to ride a tricycle?

I'm going to act out some things that you can do now that you could not do before your last birthday. (Pantomime riding a bike, buttoning your shirt, tying your shoe. Ask the children to guess what you are doing.) Who would like to act out something that you could not do when you were little, but that you can do now? The rest of us will try to guess what you are doing! (Let the children demonstrate such activities as riding a bike or swimming. You might want to whisper some suggestions to willing volunteers.)

God's plan is for you to continue to grow. You will learn to do many things. What would you like to be able to do by the time you are eight? Twelve? Sixteen? What would you like to be when you grow up?

God will always be with you and help you do the things in His plan.

The Lord Made Me

You will need the words to the unit song, "The Lord Made Me," p. 10. Gather the children together as you sing "The Lord Made Me." Say, Every day is made by the Lord God and is special. Today is special. The day you were born was special, too. Let's find out when everyone's birthday is. If you were born in January, stand up. Continue naming every month. Many children at this age may not know their birth date. Try to get birth dates when parents bring their children to class. Make comments about children born in the same month, on the same day, and on holidays. God made you. Your birthday is even more special because God made you. When He made you, He gave you arms, legs, eyes, ears, and even a tongue. Here are new words for the song, "This Is the Day." The words praise God for making you. Teach the unit song, "The Lord Made Me."

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	"I praise you because you made me [in an amazing and wonderful way]" (Psalm I 39: I 4).	(pat) (clap) (slap) (pat) (clap) (slap) (pat) (clap) (slap) (pat) (clap) (slap) (clap) (slap) (clap) (clap) (clap) (clap) (clap) (clap)	
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The Lord Made Me

(Tune: "This Is the Day")

Verse I

These are my arms, these are my arms
that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made.
I'll praise the Lord, I'll praise
the Lord
for my arms that wave,
for my arms that wave.
These are my arms that the
Lord has made;
I'll praise the Lord for my
arms that wave.
These are my arms, these
are my arms

Use these phrases for additional verses, or make up your own.

that the Lord has made.

These are my legs.
For my legs that run.
(Use "bend" for children with disabilities, or sing about other attributes.)

These are my eyes. For my eyes that see.

These are my ears. For my ears that hear.

This is my tongue. For a tongue that tastes.

Thank You God for Making Me

You will need the words to "The Lord Made Me," left.

Have the children demonstrate how strong their bodies are by helping you clean up the classroom. Make comments about how "amazing" and "wonderful" their arms, fingers, hands, and legs are.

Gather the children in a circle to sing "The Lord Made Me." Ask the children to add new words that tell other things their bodies can do.

Before the children leave, have a special prayer time so the children can thank God for one of the amazing things their bodies can do. Encourage each child to pray. Give help as needed.

▼ Bonus Activity ▲

Extra Action! Take a Bow

You will need a wide playing area. Mark off two parallel lines fifteen to twenty feet apart.

To play this tag game, divide the children into two groups. One group will be the "stars" and the other "wheat." Select one child to be "Joseph," the tagger. The stars and wheat stand side by side on the same line. Joseph will stand in the middle of the playing area. Joseph calls, "Stars, stars take a bow!" When the tagger says "bow," the stars bow and then run across the playing area to the other line. Joseph tags as many stars as he can. The tagged stars join Joseph as taggers. Joseph calls, "Wheat, wheat take a bow!" Each wheat bows and runs to the other line. The game continues until everyone has been tagged. A new Joseph is chosen and the game starts over.

To help the children calm down and review the story, ask, **Joseph had two** dreams. In one dream, eleven bundles of wheat bowed down to him. In another dream the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him. Why did this anger his brothers?



Guide your kids on a year-long journey through the Bible!

There's nothing more important to teach our children than how to build a relationship with God, and there's no better way to do that than to teach kids the Bible. Route 52™ is a Bible-based journey that will take kids through the Bible in a year every year from age three to twelve. Using all ten titles, you can help your kids explore, discover, follow, grow, and study through the Bible.

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ages 4-6 · learn to trust God,

- · obey God and follow Jesus,
- help and share with others, and
- · be thankful and kind.

Check out these application-boosting lesson features:

- Scripturally sound lesson themes
- Culturally relevant, hands-on activities
- Age-appropriate Bible-learning challenges
- · Reproducible life-application activity pages

Finally, a reproducible Bible study curriculum for children of all ages! **Route 52**™ Bible lessons will help kids learn the Bible and how to apply it to their lives at their own level of spiritual development. *Route 52*™ Bible lessons are appropriate for Bible school, children's church, youth group, kids club, or mid-week Bible study programs.



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